

## star crossed lovers (aren't always what they seem to be)

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## star crossed lovers (aren't always what they seem to be)

by [que\\_sera\\_sera](#)

### Summary

or, a clay/george wlv theatre au, where clay plays juliet and georgie plays female benvolio.

## our misadventured piteous overthrows

### Chapter Summary

it's the beginning of something new.

### Chapter Notes

i'm using real names to make the story feel more real. i have my socials posted on my ao3 profile, so if any of the dream team has a problem with this, they can either message me or say so in one of their videos (not like i watch them religiously... no way... /s).

it might not be clear in the beginning, so col = female sapnap, just so you guys know.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Apparently, the cast list for the play has come out today. Clay couldn't wait to be rejected.

But, somehow, by some weird miracle, she sees her name on the list. Clay tried out for the role of Juliet on an absolute whim. It seemed like fun at the time. After all, there was almost no way that she would get the role. There were other more talented, more experienced people out there.

She glances over the rest of the list - most of it is filled with unfamiliar names. She doesn't really hang around the theatre crowd much, preferring to hang out with her fellow computer nerds like Col and Darryl. Col has actually signed up for the play, and she's gotten the role as the Nurse, which is cool. Juliet and the Nurse have a lot of interaction time (at least, from what snippets Clay can remember from reading in eighth grade English). Darryl's little brother is on there, as well. Since Darryl can drive, she supposes that Darryl will be at school during practices. She recognizes a few other names, like Harvey from her CSA class, and Zak, from English. Truthfully, most of the names that she already knows are just a bunch of Darryl's extra nerdy friends that she recognized. The rest are theatre kids or just someone Clay really couldn't categorize. She looks at some of the more important roles. Harvey is playing Mercutio, Zak is playing Tybalt, and a guy named Ethan is playing Romeo in her cast. On a whim, she glances at the Benvolio role. She doesn't recognize the name. Georgie Davidson? Clay has no clue who that is or who that could be.

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"So, I suppose a congratulations is in order, Clay!" Darryl says excitedly.

"Hey, man. Col deserves congratulations too. That's a really good role," Clay replies, kind of tiredly.

Col frowns. "Yeah, but you got Juliet. You're the leading woman."

"I wasn't trying to be." Clay kind of sounds like she's whining, so she switches her tone. "I mean, this was all meant to be for shits and giggles. I don't want to transform into a prima donna in a

day.”

“Shut up, Clay.” Col grins, and Clay is nudged by Col’s shoulder. “You deserve this, dude.”

“After 10 whole days of suffering through my theatrical career, I have now gone past my hardships to become Juliet.” Clay snorts.

“Those were a rough ten days. Nobody would talk to me,” Darryl complains. “I had to figure out the Minecraft plugin all on my own. I had to stream our survival world on Twitch all on my own. Even my own brother wouldn’t talk to me.”

“Boo-hoo, Darryl,” Col says. Clay lets out a little tiny giggle.

“Let me play a sad song for you on the world’s smallest violin.” Clay rubs her fingers together, in order to imitate Mr. Krabs.

“Screw you, you...” Darryl glances around, most likely seeing a teacher nearby. “You muffinhead.”

Col snaps her fingers. “There is zero tolerance for bullying in this school. Clay and Darryl, you both need to go down to the principal’s office and both of you need the same punishment.”

“Not in my school!” Darryl says in a faux enthusiastic voice. He brings his arm down a little, his hands in a clenched fist, and stops it, to accentuate the point.

Clay wheezes. “You guys.”

“Oh crap, only three minutes left in the passing period. I haven’t even gotten my books yet. Bye!” Darryl says suddenly.

“Nerd,” Col replies after him.

“His locker and his class are right here.” Clay rolls her eyes. “Men. I don’t get em.”

“Me neither, love. Me neither,” Col says in a very fake British accent.

---

“Bad, to your right,” Col says exasperatedly. Darryl moves left.

“Your *other* right.” Clay snickers.

“Gosh, sorry. I wasn’t paying attention to what key I was pressing.” Clay can feel Darryl rolling his eyes through the screen.

They’re playing Minecraft and streaming on Twitch right now. They all have their aliases here: Clay is called Dream, Col is called Sapnap (kind of the backwards of “Pandas,” but not really), and Darryl is called “BadBoyHalo.” When they asked Darryl why, he said, “It’s poetic! I’m a bad boy with a heart of gold.” Col and Clay just looked at each other and rolled their eyes.

“Bad, go get the diamonds,” Clay says. Col is taking care of the bed, and Clay is getting emeralds from the center. She’s being very careful, having grabbed one from somebody that she killed and spending it on an invisibility potion so that she doesn’t die. It only lasts for thirty seconds, so she quickly grabs all of the emeralds from their pods. She got 5 emeralds from the thing. It’s enough for obsidian - or diamond armor. She ignores the selfish pull in her head and tells the team, “I’ve gotten 5 emeralds. Three more and we can get full obey around our bed.”

“Hand it here,” Col says impatiently.

“Okay, geez, C-Sapnap.” It’s weird to call themselves different names in different places. It’s definitely weird for Clay.

Col gets back into it quickly, though. “Patience is the one virtue that I don’t have.”

Clay snorts. “Yeah, right.”

Bad gets back with his inventory, presumably full of diamonds. He purchases a mining fatigue trap, and upgrades the forge to emerald level.

“Pogchamp,” Col jokes. “Now we don’t need to go in the center for emeralds.”

“We can still go,” Clay reminds Col.

“You can go commit suicide and lose emeralds if you really want to.”

“Okay, *mom*. What if I do?”

Col just sighs. Clay grins.

“Bad, how many diamonds do you have left?” Col asks.

“Zero. Does it look like I’m made of money?” Darryl answers.

“Then just go back, Bad!” Clay says. As she speaks, somebody sends in a \$20 donation with a note.

“I really love and appreciate what you’re doing, Dream! Keep making the awesome content. P.S. I love Sapnap and Bad too.

“Aw, thank you, birdlover439!” Clay says. Donations like this are rare, so she always makes sure to shoutout whoever donates a good amount like that. Whenever donos are slower, she also shouts them out, but the donations are going in pretty steadily, which is nice.

She’s not sure whether it’s because guys are weird, or because people genuinely love her content, but it’s whatever. She hasn’t done a face reveal yet, so it can’t be based on that.

“I’ve destroyed Yellow’s bed!” Col announces victoriously.

“Yellow’s going to come for ours. Does anybody have enough emeralds for full obsidian?” Clay asks.

“Yep, I do!” Darryl says, and goes to the shop. Col has already placed the four obsidian on the top and to the left side of the bed (from the attacker’s vantage point), so Darryl places one in the front, back, and two on the sides. He covers the rest up with end stone, some blastproof glass, and wood, as well as some leftover wool. Clay has mostly been getting iron, gold, and diamonds, so she purchases more protection (somehow) and gets two iron golems. She also buys a diamond axe and a bow, as well as a bunch of arrows. A diamond axe easily does more damage than an iron sword, but has a slower response time, so she gets both so that she can max out her damage. The axe also gets the sharpness boost, with Sharpness I.

They easily fend off the yellow team, keeping them off of the island. The yellow team attacks with everyone there, but it’s clear that they don’t play as often as Darryl, Col, and Clay, and that they

aren't in sync like them. Darryl often calls them the "Three Muffintees" - Clay, Col, and Darryl. Darryl often uses the word "muffin" to replace when they're streaming for YouTube or just recording for YouTube in general. Sometimes, Darryl just uses the word "muffin" because he wants to. They eventually kill everyone on the yellow team, aided by their heal pool and their protection III armor.

"Okay, so what do you want to do with the person on the Blue Team?" Col asks.

"Personally? I want to get rid of them so that we can win," Clay said cheekily.

"No duh, Sherlock." Darryl stopped to clear his throat. "How?"

"We'll make the plan up as we go," Clay decides.

"I'd put myself first, and make the rules as I go," Col sings. Immediately, Clay's chat blows up. She manages to catch a few messages.

*I knew that Sapnap was a Beyonce stan.*

*omg sapnap's singing? clears my skin, waters my crops, restores my vision*

"They're loving it, Sapnap. Don't stop," Clay says.

"Cause I know that she'd be faithful, waiting for me to come home. To come home!" Col sings triumphantly.

Clay smiles. "Sapnap's had singing lessons in the past."

"I sure have!" Col exclaims. "I didn't pay for those just to have no vocal range."

"I am wasting away while you two are talented," Darryl complains. "Dream and Sapnap auditioned for the school play. Sapnap got a really important role and Dream is a main character. They both auditioned as a *joke*. Meanwhile, I'm here, playing Minecraft, and being too cowardly for the stage crew."

"Shut up, Bad. I'm sure you'll do great as a part of the stage crew." Col sighs, clearly not ready to emotionally console anyone right now.

Clay switches to her phone, and sends Darryl a message on Discord.

*r u doin ok? u can always talk to col & i you know <3.*

Darryl sends a reply back.

*Doing meh but what can u do*

*do u wanna talk for longer after stream? maybe discord instead of ts?*

*Sure I'm fine with that*

"Sorry about that, guys. I was reading some donations," Clay says.

"Yeah, me too," Darryl adds.

"I'm almost at that blue person's island right now. The annoyances of being the red team," Col says. Green team was eliminated rather early on in the match, so Col could just go over that way,

or by Yellow's island. Darryl goes one way, while Clay goes the other. Col jumps over, and tries to kill the blue person. Col gets a few good hits, but she gets knocked into the void.

"My sword!" she exclaims. "It will never come back."

"Oh no," Clay says flatly.

"I'm so sorry for your loss, Col. Truly tragic," Darryl replies in a fake mournful voice. "It leaves this giant hole in your heart, but I know you can get through it."

Clay and Darryl go over, and attack the blue person at the same time. They probably didn't expect that, because Clay and Darryl kill the person pretty easily.

"Woohoo, dragons!" Clay tries to maneuver the dragon, but honestly, they do what they want.

"Anyways, I think this is going to be the last game of the night, guys. It's getting kind of late and I actually care about getting up for school tomorrow. Not sure about these two, though," Col says. She quits Teamspeak and leaves Darryl and Clay alone.

"Offensive, but yeah. I'm tired too," Darryl quits Teamspeak, too.

"Anyways, guys. Make sure to subscribe to BadBoyHalo, Sapnap, and Dream on YouTube. Socials are posted on my Twitch account. It really means a lot to us, especially cause I'm only a few away from 100k, the coveted silver play button." Clay takes a moment to respond to donos, and she eventually leaves with a "Bye, guys! See you on Friday."

Clay sighs. Streaming is fun, but it's nice to just relax after the stream is done.

She closes all of her browser tabs, goes onto mobile Discord, and joins Col and Darryl's discord call.

"Hey Darryl, what's up?"

---

Clay feels drained. It's probably from staying up so late, but it was worth it to make sure that Darryl was okay. Right now, it's the passing period before AP CSA, which means that it's nearly the end of the day, but not yet. Even though lunch only happened a little more than a period ago, she still feels hungry, which is weird.

She checks over her homework in her head. *Reading for US History, fake taxes for Financial Literacy, finishing the study guide for the Bio test tomorrow, starting an essay analyzing the importance of Ophelia in Hamlet, and finishing the first chapter of her dystopian novel for Creative Writing.* Ugh. The Creative Writing homework will be fun though, since she's already planned out the plot for most of the chapters, and most of her work is writing in some dialogue and some connectors. Everything else is not going to be fun. Especially the fake taxes.

Along with the Bio test and the thesis of her essay, she has her first practice for *Romeo and Juliet* tomorrow. She's not sure how to feel. She feels rather neutral about the whole thing. But for now, she needs to get into CSA, and she needs to continue her project.

this took me like 5 tries to post so. not fun.

so this is where i generally wanted to establish clay's world? yes, i know, georgie has not arrived, but do not worry. next chapter she will be **MORE** than arrived. if you enjoyed this chapter, let me know by giving me kudos and/or commenting below!

just realized i accidentally set an entire youtuber play on accident with youtubers i don't know. but. certain people are original characters for the sake of original characters and others are real people. there are a few genderbent people as well (bc the community dream and bbh, which is how i got most of the connections in the first place, are in is **HEAVILY** masculine). so you know. enjoy the ride!

# heavy and light, bright and dark, hot and cold, sick and healthy, asleep and awake

## Chapter Summary

it's clay's first day at practice, and perhaps she's not ready for everything.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The school bell rings, signifying the last class of the day. The first round of bus riders are quick to get out of the classroom, trying to get a good seat on their buses. Normally, Clay is with them, trying to save a seat for Col or Darryl, whoever arrives first. Usually, Col is more prompt than Darryl. But today, it's the first day of practice for Romeo and Juliet. Wouldn't do at all to miss that, especially because she is the main.

Clay packs her stuff up slower than she usually does, mostly because she has the time.

"Bye, Mrs. Thomas!" Clay says, as she's leaving the classroom, to her stats teacher.

"Have a nice day," Mrs. Thomas responds.

Clay replies with a nod and a "You too."

What room is this in? She should remember. Fortunately, Col is the best and she texts Clay.

*hi idiot ik you've forgotten where to go. we wait in the cafeteria until they take us somewhere. think we're just doing icebreakers today tbh*

Clay grins and responds to the message.

*ty col ur a literal lifesaver. and ya the icebreakers make sense*

Clay sees the notification on her phone, and goes into the messaging app as quickly as it came.

*there's so much testosterone here clay help me i'm sticking with one of the few girls here*

Clay snickers quietly, as to not attract the attention of anyone. She puts her phone away in her pocket (men's jeans are an absolute technological wonder) and walks at a brisker pace to get to the cafeteria faster.

---

"Col!" Clay says happily.

"Clay!" Col greets. "Sorry. Uh, Clay, this is Georgie. Georgie, this is my friend Clay."

"H-hi," Clay stammers. Fuck, this Georgie girl is drop-dead *gorgeous*. Her shoulder length brown hair is mostly straight, with a little curl at the end. Her eyes are deep brown, like you could get lost in them. "Nice to meet you."



Clay holds her hand out in a fist bump.

"Nice to meet you too," Georgie says, accepting the fist bump. She has a British accent, and her voice is so beautiful. She's probably a transfer. That explains a lot. But, damn.

*A fist bump?* What was she thinking?

"Benvolio, right?" Clay asks.

"Yeah. Juliet, right?" Georgie replies.

"Guilty." God, Clay is acting *so* stupid right now. What's even going on?

"Nice." Georgie smiles and her lips curve in such a way that Clay just finds irresistible.

"Yeah," Clay sighs happily.

---

"Hello, everyone! I'm Anna! I'm one of the helpers for Ms. Purcell. I graduated two years ago and I try to come back for theatre every year."

After everyone was whisked away to what Col recognized as one of the orchestra rooms, they sat down in the chairs (Col slyly picking out her normal chair).

Now, everyone's listening to this Anna. She seems to end a lot of her sentences with exclamation marks, but to be fair, an introduction kind of warrants for that.

"In case you're wondering, Ms. Purcell is unfortunately sick today, so she couldn't come to teach you all. She told me to tell you all that she's sorry that she can't come and that she can't wait to see you all." Anna smiles to accentuate her point.

"Anyways, today we're going to be doing a few icebreakers! While we will get to know each other on stage, it's important that we all know each other at least a little to see how we'll click," Anna explains. "So, for our first icebreaker, we're going to go around the room, and just say our names and an alliterative adjective before them. At the end, I'm going to say all of your names and the adjective. But, to help me remember, all of you will have to say the names and the adjectives before them of the people before you and your name and adjective. So, remember to listen as you go along!"

*Told you so*, Col mouths to Clay.

"Did I ever doubt you?" Clay whispers.

Col shakes her head as to say no.

Clay is actually really grateful that she's sat closer to the front, but there's still quite a few people in front of her.

"I'm going to start first," Anna said. "Analytical Anna."

"What are you going to do?" Georgie whispers. "I'm personally thinking Grandiose Georgie."

"No clue," Clay whispers back. "Cretinous Clay?"

"You'd get sent to the principal's office for that one," Col chimes in, still whispering. "Personally, I'm going with Coltish Col, and Clay, if you steal my adjective, I am going to be heavily upset."

"Don't worry," Clay whispers. "I have an adjective. Clamorous Clay."

They stay silent until they have to speak for the icebreaker again.

"Ok. Analytical Anna, Marvelous Max, Keen Keely, Wonderful William, Allegiant Alec, Exceptional Ethan, Valid Vincent, Stellar Steven, Jazzy Jacky, and Grandiose Georgie."

It was perfect. No breaks, and Clay could catch up on the people ahead of her.

"Analytical Anna, Marvelous Max, Keen Keely, Wonderful William, Allegiant Alec, Exceptional Ethan, Valid Vincent, Stellar Steven, Jazzy Jacky, Grandiose Georgie, and Clamorous Clay," Clay recites. She took a few pauses to make sure that everything was perfect, but she got everything. She did it! She did it.

Col quickly recites everybody's names and does it peppily too. While Clay isn't annoyed, it's fun to pretend to be.

"Showoff," Clay grumbles under her breath.

Col nudged Clay with her shoulder. "You love it."

Clay rolls her eyes.

---

As soon as the first icebreaker is done, Anna is ready with a second: to build IKEA furniture with the instructions. Not everybody's been given the same thing. It's clear that this icebreaker actually has a second purpose, to build furniture for the set, but honestly, Clay doesn't even care. Col's paired off with someone else and she sends an apologetic look in Clay's way. So, Clay and Georgie pair off.

"This can't be harder than building PCs," Georgie mutters under her breath.

"You built PCs?" Clay asks.

"It was a part of my job, yeah." Georgie smiles. "Back at, uh, back in England."

*Back at home*, Georgie doesn't say.

"I built my own," Clay says shyly. "But that's it."

Georgie snorts. "I built PC's for privileged kids with nothing better to do than to buy expensive equipment and fail at being YouTubers."

"Fun," Clay notes in a sarcastic tone. "Anyways, We're going to need a screwdriver, a hammer, and the other type of screwdriver."

"The other type of screwdriver?" Georgie asks, with a humorous tone.

Uh, fuck. Clay has to play this off smoothly.

"If I remember, I think one of them is called the Phillips head screwdriver. I don't know. Whenever my parents did something, I just remembered what it looked like, not what it was called. And there's only two main types of screwdrivers," Clay says. "I swear I got an A in Woodworking."

Georgie laughs, and Clay's heard it before, but Georgie's laugh is just so rich and deep, like chocolate, and sweet, too. "Eh. I mean woodworking doesn't always have to deal with screws,

right? Like screws nowadays are made out of metal? Metal, wood. Two completely different things." Georgie grins. "No, but seriously. I think as long as you know what they look like, you should be fine."

"Okay, I'll get the tools and you can count the materials to make sure we have them all," Clay says. She feels confident about this. After all, she's built IKEA furniture before.

"Of course." Georgie diligently grabs a bag and checks the amount of screws in it. She looks so beautiful while she's concentrating, furrowing her brows, and scrunching her face to be absolutely heart-melting.

Error 404: Clay doesn't know what the hell is going on. She goes to collect the screwdrivers and the hammer (where she discovers that the other type of screwdriver is called the slotted screwdriver).

"So. What's this first step?"

---

The first few steps are rather easy. First, they screw in a double sided screw four times in the four corners of the table. Next, they attach the legs on in the same fashion. After that, they apply a template to help them screw some holes into the table on one side.

"This is a mindfuck," Clay complains.

The next step is that they have to screw some things in with the longer, one sided screw.

"I wish we could call IKEA," Georgie says, flipping to the front of the packet. "This sucks."

"Agreed. Why can't they just offer words along with the pictures?" Clay asks, wiping the sweat from her forehead.

"Too much money," Georgie answers quickly.

Clay nods. "Makes sense."

Georgie and Clay stand together, trying to figure out the directions. Clay feels so warm and blushy. Georgie has to notice it.

Strangely, no.

"Wait, I've got it!" Clay exclaims suddenly. "You put the thing in the middle, screw it in with a longer screw, and you do that on both legs. Then, I think you repeat for the other side."

"Wait." Georgie squints at the paper. "Yeah, you're right."

Clay's heart soars.

---

They've gotten the entire table set up and it looks nice. It's a dark wooden table with a really nice two-layered design.

"Nice!" Clay and Georgie hi-five each other.

Georgie's skin is so soft, but it has a few calluses here and there and honestly her hands are so wonderful and -

She needs to stop. This is weird. So weird.

"Do we just wait around while everyone finishes?" Clay asks.

The question was meant to be rhetorical, but Georgie answers anyways.

"Probably." Georgie leans back against a pillar and looks over at Clay.

Fuck. She can't even right now.

Clay smiles over to Georgie and she grabs her phone.

"Do you have a number I can contact you by?" Clay asks.

"Yeah, if you hand me your phone, I can type it in." Georgie's eyes are twinkling.

Clay gives Georgie her phone.

"How do you know that I wasn't going to take it and sell it on the black market?" Georgie asks.

Clay makes a "gimme" motion. "Well, I didn't think you were going to be this rude."

Georgie holds the phone in an odd position before laughing. "Sorry."

Georgie types in for a bit, and she gives back Clay's phone.

"Thanks. I'll just text you and you can get my number that way," Clay explains.

Georgie covers her face with her hand. "The suspense is killing me already."

Clay snickers. "It won't be that long."

"I believe you." Georgie smiles.

And Clay feels her betraying heart leap up in her chest.

---

Clay gets a notification from Darryl once she leaves the practice room.

*I'm taking col and u home*

Clay grins.

*not even taking ur lil brother? kinda cruel*

She sees Col and runs to catch up with her.

"Col! Hi," Clay pants.

"Hi! Sorry for abandoning you," Col replies.

"Nah, I had Georgie." Clay smiles.

"Cool. Where's Darryl?" Col asks.

"Dunno. We should probably find Alec though."

As if on a perfect Romeo and Juliet cue, Alec appears.

"Hi," he says curtly. "Darryl told me that he was over by the exit near here."

"Cool," Col says.

They walk together in relative silence, going towards the exit Alec was leading them through.

"Hi muffins!" Darryl exclaims brightly.

"Hi Darryl," Clay says. "How was it waiting an hour for us?"

"I went on a fun little adventure to the Starbucks across the street," Darryl replies. "Didn't get you guys anything though, sorry."

"It's okay. If we want you to be our Uber Eats, we'll tell you before. During lunch or something," Col adds.

Darryl salutes. "Got it."

Clay and Col wheeze. Alec smiles a little bit, too.

---

Analytical essays suck. So much.

She's started her first paragraph on the importance of Ophelia in Hamlet, but she's really not interested. Like, at all.

She has Georgie's number. She could text her at any time. Clay probably should text Georgie.

*hi! guess who*

She deletes the text.

*hey! it's clay from practice.*

Clay deletes it again. How the hell can she figure out how to text her?

*hi! it's clay.*

She sends it. Too late to regret anything now.

Georgie replies pretty quickly.

*awesome! i've added your number to my contacts.*

Clay smiles. She drafts a quick text.

*would you buy ikea furniture in the future?*

It's not bad. She sends it.

*not sure. would have to try it again*

*glad to hear it.*

*what, do you work for ikea? is this the customer satisfaction survey?*

*you figured out my secret.*

lmao okay

Clay laughs.

*are you excited for sword fighting?*

*yes i'm gonna look so badass*

*i can't wait*

Fuck, Georgie was going to look amazing sword fighting.

It's only been a few hours. What's happening?

## Chapter End Notes

power went out the first time i tried to upload this. for about a minute. bruh.  
had to reformat (italics and spacing) and then i realized that i had inconsistent quotes.  
waaa. fixed it all though!

if you liked this, kudos and comment below! also would love to see ur predictions  
haha

# hopeful lady of my earth

## Chapter Summary

clay's day is like a weird trance. it might be just sleep deprivation, but it could be something else.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay looks out the window on the bus, with her elbow on the thin ledge, watching as the pattering rain drearily covers everything on the ground. The sky is a greyish white, with the promise of blue skies another day. She can't pick out that many individual clouds, but with the way that the rain is going, she can tell that there's a lot in the sky.

She quickly checks her phone. The time is 6:53 AM. It's so damn early in the morning. It sucks. At least she doesn't have zero hour. According to Col, the bus comes an hour earlier in the mornings. That's probably a violation of some international or national law. Or something.

The gentle motion of the bus feels like it's trying to lull her into sleep. The window feels like it's trying to rattle her out of it. There's a delicate balance and Clay isn't sure if she has it.

Clay's mind drifts gently back to yesterday. It was a lot of fun. But most notably, it was Georgie. Georgie Davidson, the transfer student from England, with the beautiful hair and eyes and smile. With everything.

Suddenly, Georgie's sitting next to her on the bus. She's wearing a short sleeved periwinkle shirt and black shorts that go to her knees. Her black backpack with little white patterns on it from yesterday.

"Hey," Georgie says. "You look tired."

"Yeah." Clay smiles. "This isn't really a sustainable schedule."

Georgie tilts her head and looks at Clay. Clay feels like Georgie is looking at her *soul*.

"You still look beautiful," Georgie adds. She winks.

Clay rubs her eyes. Georgie isn't there. Luckily, there's almost nobody on the bus, so they couldn't have witnessed her being... weird. What even happened?

She shakes her head and sighs.

The next stop is Darryl's. He spots Clay and sits next to her.

"I'm so ridiculously tired," Clay complains.

"I'm sorry." Darryl attempts to pat her head, but he's shorter than Clay so it just looks like an awkward reach with Darryl kind of squatting to do so.

Time passes quickly, and soon the bus stops, stops again, stops another time until the bus is full of people and they're on their way to school.

---

"How did the Civil War affect the way that America interacted with the world?" Mr. Stein asks.

Clay looks to the clock. 8:02. She's more than halfway through the period. Thank whatever was in the sky.

US History is fascinating, but not when it's the same thing that she's been taught countless times.

"Samuel?" Mr. Stein calls.

"Made the United States more likely to interfere in conflicts that weren't right on their borders," the boy answers.

"That is one way, yes." Mr. Stein writes "became nosier" on the whiteboard. "Anyone else?"

Clay raises her hand.

"Clay?"

"Uh," Clay stops to collect her thoughts. "It made America look slightly better throughout the world, seeing as they finally abolished slavery. They were less hypocritical and all of that."

"Very good," Mr. Stein replies. He writes "reputation boost" on the board.

"A few more people, perhaps?" Mr. Stein asks.

---

The time is 9:54, and Clay is bored.

She's taking AP Bio because it fills a graduation requirement, but she learned a lot of things in freshman year biology class and honestly the teacher droning on about RNA Synthesis while she fills in guided notes is trying. From translation to transcription to good transcript. That's the hope.

Clay doodles on the side of her paper, a little minecraft heart. She makes sure to get all of the little pixels absolutely perfect. She has some stationery, enough to make the doodle accurate.

The teacher moves onto the next slide. Quickly, Clay fills in everything she needs to and she continues to draw in her little minecraft heart.

---

It's right after CSA, around 2:20, and Col is right outside of the door when Clay gets out.

"You good?" Col asks.

"Yeah." Clay sighs. "You?"

"I'm good." Col leans back against the wall. "So, we're gonna record after practice?"

"Yep." Clay adjusts her backpack strap so that it rests more on her shoulder. "Speedrunner versus speedrunner. Should be exciting."

"This is extremely biased, Ms. Near World Record." Col crosses her arms.

"By like, 2 minutes. I got a shitty Nether," Clay says.



"I can't wait until we get the plugin working," Col grumbles. "Then I'll almost never have to beat Minecraft again."

---

Finally, Stats. The last class of the day.

Mrs. Thomas had assigned the class an FRQ to do based on the current unit they were doing and units in the past.

Clay taps her pencil against the paper. Central limit theorem and all of that. Great.

Sample of 66 people. Can't be a nice 65 or 70. Or a nice 69. Clay snorts quietly.

Her sample is relatively normal, according to the Central limit theorem. Or something like that.

Her brain feels like it's melting.

By Part D of the FRQ, her brain is no longer melting. It's evaporating. Valuable brain cells are being lost by the minute.

Woohoo.

---

Finally, she's done for the day, and she heads out to the cafeteria. Yesterday, Anna told everyone that she would pick everyone up at the cafeteria for the first week and that Ms. Purcell, the director of the play, would be at school.

Clay finds Georgie alone. Col must be busy.

"Hi!" Georgie says warmly.

"Hi," Clay replies, sliding in near Georgie. Almost close enough to touch.

"We get our lines today," Georgie remarks.

"Just going straight for it. Driving into a wall," Clay replies.

"Unfair. We are driving into a fence," Georgie says. "It's still a barrier but it's not as bad."

"Hm," Clay ponders. "I guess you're right."

Clay sees Col out of the corner of her eyes.

"I don't want to ask Col this. But is Col a nickname?" Georgie asks.

"Col is a nickname for Nicoleta, and you don't call her that unless you don't know better or you have a death wish," Clay answers.

"Death by vengeful woman," Georgie says. "Not sure if that's good or bad."

"Sounds like a mediocre band name," Clay remarks. Georgie wheezes and even Clay allows herself some snickers.

"Hi," Col says, sitting down across the table from Clay and Georgie. "Sorry. Got held up by the CSA teacher."

"What did Chen want you for?" Clay asks.

"I wanted him for letters of recommendation. He asked too many questions." Col rolls her eyes.

"You're not late," Clay says. "That's the important part."

---

"Hello everyone! I'm Ms. Purcell. Sorry for not going to practice yesterday, I got sick with something. Don't worry, it's not contagious."

Col looks at Clay and Georgie and they seem to share a mutual moment of understanding.

"So, today, everyone will be getting their lines! Now, we're doing the full version of Romeo and Juliet, meaning that this is going to be long. So, for our first readthrough today, we're just going to be doing a guided reading of the prologue and Act 1, Scenes 1 through 2. Now, I want some drama and humor in your voice. No feelings come up out of a monotone," Ms. Purcell says.

Anna and a few other of Ms. Purcell's assistants pass out certain things to certain people. Clay gets her lines eventually.

She flips through the stapled together packet. It's completely devoid of highlighting the first few scenes, which makes sense. At some points, it seems like the whole page is highlighted. Yikes. She has to memorize all of that?

"We'll give you a few moments to go through your lines," Ms. Purcell announces.

Col and Clay don't have lines today, which means that they can relax, but Georgie has lines. Oh fuck. Clay swallows.

"Starting from the prologue! Narrator, you take it away," Ms. Purcell says.

A scrawny kid with slightly dark skin stands up. His name is George, if Clay recalls correctly.

"You don't have to stand," Ms. Purcell says. "If you want, sit down and we can take it from the top again."

The kid sits down. He starts reciting, "Two households both alike in dignity, in fair Verona where we set our scene. From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. From forth the fatal loins of these two foes a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; whose misadventured piteous overthrows doth with their death bury their parents' strife. The fearful passage of their death-marked love and the continuance of their parents' rage, which, but their children's end, naught could remove, is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; the which, if you with patient ears attend, what here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend."

The kid (George) has an English accent, and he takes pauses in places that make sense. Hm. This was a lot better than eighth grade English class.

"Very good, narrator! Now, moving onto Act 1, Scene 1. Gregory, Sampson, Abram, Montague Servingman, Benvolio, Tybalt, Lords and Ladies Capulet and Montague, Prince, anybody with the part of 'citizens,' and Romeo," Ms. Purcell says.

Clay mostly blocks everything out except "Benvolio." That means Georgie. Okay. She's chill. She's fine! Totally good.

---

"Part, fools!" Georgie exclaims. "Put up your swords. You know not what you do."

"What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?" Zak asks condescendingly. "Turn thee, Benvolio; look upon thy death."

"I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword, or manage it to part these men with me," Georgie retorts.

Clay is fascinated. The way that Georgie manages to keep up the tone with the story is just amazing.

Eventually, the fighting scene ends and Benvolio confronts a lovesick Romeo.

Clay can only focus on Georgie, being Benvolio, laughing and teasing so-sweetly.

"What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?" Georgie asks teasingly.

"Not having that which, having, makes them short," the boy playing Romeo complains. His name is Ethan, if Clay remembers correctly from the cast list.

"In love?"

"Out-"

"Of love?"

Ethan sighs. "Out of her favor where I am in love."

"Alas that love," Georgie teases. "So gentle in his view, should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!"

"Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still, should without eyes see pathways to his will!" Ethan says, with emphasis on certain parts. "Where shall we dine? O me, what fray was here? Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all."

Clay zones out from that point. She stares at a point in the wall and just sits there.

"Well done! Sampson and Gregory, if you could add a bit more malice to your tone, that would be wonderful. Onto Scene 2! We will need Capulet, Paris, Peter, Benvolio, and Romeo!"

---

"You did really well at practice today," Clay says.

"Really?" Georgie asks, arching one brow.

Clay swallows. Georgie is absolutely gorgeous and she just pulled the one brow thing out of nowhere.

"Yeah. You were funny and you made the play feel like it was dynamic." Clay smiles. "Don't remember it being this good in eighth grade."

"That's because your class made it boring." Georgie grins. "Your material is going to only be as much fun as your class makes it out to be."

"That makes sense," Clay admits. "Besides, analyzing was one of the worst parts."

"Makes sense." Georgie grins another one of those beautiful grins and God, Clay wants to ignore it but she *can't*.

Clay swallows. "Yeah."

The feeling all throughout her chest can't decide whether to be excited or nervous for tomorrow.

## Chapter End Notes

slightly shorter than usual but the next update is gonna be very long so dw !!  
might take me longer though rip

if you enjoyed, kudos this story and/or comment below! if you have predictions,  
comment those!

## an honor to not dream of

### Chapter Summary

they say time flies when you're having fun.

### Chapter Notes

i received a few comments in the last chapter about the shakespearean language being quite confusing (which i totally get), so i figured i'd attach the thing that's best for any time you're reading a shakespearean work, whether it's intertwined into a fanfiction or in class! [sparknotes!](#)

slight tw/cw for mention of traumatic relationship. it starts at the words "most of all, she has to pretend to kiss a guy" and ends at "yeah, she knows this is going to be a lot better than the last time." the section is mostly blocked off too so right after clay eats cereal and says something, there's a little line? if you get triggered by traumatic relationships, then i would skip that section. if you need anything tagged in the notes, then i can tag it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

At least one thing's remained kind of the same. Recording.

Clay usually records her intros while she's editing, so at least that's taken care of.

"Ok. Sapnap, are you ready?" Clay asks.

"Yep!" Col replies. "Let's obtain this grain."

"Isn't it 'let's get this bread?'" Clay furrows her eyebrows, but she unfurrows them because she remembers that Sapnap can't see her.

"New phrase." Col clucks her tongue. "Get with the times, Dream."

"We're gonna have a fair countdown, so on my count. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, go!"

Clay rushes to the trees.

"So unfair. You literally rushed the countdown," Col complains while cutting down the tree.

"Get with the times, Snapmap," Clay mocks.

"Oh no, you did not," Col says.

"What if I did?"

"You are *so* dead when I see you tomorrow," Col proclaims.

Clay just giggles.

---

Clay mostly focuses on her speedrunning game, though chasing and fighting Sapnap happens often.

"Oh, Sapnap!" she says, making sure to pop the consonant at the end of each syllable.

"My disappointment is immeasurable and my day is ruined," Col quotes.

Col's character is running through the trees and in full iron armor. So is Clay's. They've both already been to the Nether, and now they just have to get ender pearls for eyes of ender.

Col drinks something, but Clay can't tell what. Clay assumes that it's a strength potion and she runs away.

"Oh, Dream!" Col says.

Two can play at that game. Clay drinks a strength and regeneration potion and she quickly hits Col with her diamond sword. Col blocks it with her shield, and hits Clay. Owch. Four and a half hearts. Luckily, the regeneration potion heals everything, but there's only 20 seconds left.

"Leave me alone!" Clay shrieks.

"Why should I listen to you?" Col asks.

Clay runs away quickly, but she finds a village. Ugh, if only Col weren't on her trail.

She eventually runs to a savanna biome. Hopefully, there should be a savanna village here, but Clay has no idea.

Clay goes into F5 and checks to see that Col isn't chasing her. Clay is not being chased. Good.

Clay puts down her crafting table. She's gotten enough sand and gravel for three bits of TNT. If she goes to a more dense forest, she can blow some of it up or something. She crosses the river and sees a more dense forest. Perfect.

She rigs the TNT against the side of an oak tree in the forest, lights it up with a flint and steel, and runs back. She collects all of the wood, along with the other annoying stuff. Clay repeats until she has about a stack and a half of logs.

Then, she turns it all into planks. After that, she turns into sticks. In the end, she gets three stacks of sticks. She needs more TNT. Or sticks. Ugh.

She finds a plains village, and she quickly takes the wood blocks surrounding the farms to make more sticks. She finds a Fletcher, and gets eight emeralds. She needs more sticks in order to level up the cleric. Clay doesn't have 32 rotten flesh, after all. Also, the ender pearl trade costs five emeralds. She only had three ender pearls, which she had already turned into eyes of ender.

"What are you doing, Clay?" Col asks.

"Concentrating," Clay responds.

"Why?"

"Because I have to?" Clay's getting curious now. This sounds like an evil monologue before Col

does something. No way, but perhaps?

"Fine with me." Col hums a little bit.

Clay sees something pop up in the chat.

"Sapnap has made the advancement 'Eye Spy.'"

"No!" Clay yells. "How?"

"In a certain way," Col says.

"I hope you never find the portal room," Clay grumbles.

A few stacks of sticks later, and Clay finally has all of the eyes of ender she would need for the portal. Clay digs a hole for the fletcher and the cleric villagers, and puts them underground to spite Col.

She sets out the first eye of ender, and follows it.

---

The stronghold is pretty close by to where she is.

"Ugh, you're kidding me!" Col says when the message pops up in chat.

"Nope." Clay grins, even though she knows that Col can't see it.

Col sighs very loudly.

Clay puts in all of the eyes, but she has a plan. She takes the time to completely coat the room in obsidian, so that it's nearly impossible for Col to get in.

There. Now she's ready.

---

"Hell yeah!" Clay says.

"I was so close," Col complains. "So damn close."

"You scared me too," Clay admits. "Like when I saw that notification I thought I was totally screwed."

"That stupid obsidian thing was so smart." Col sighs. "Don't ever do it again."

"Will ignore that previous statement," Clay says proudly.

Col snickers and Clay wheezes.

"You're laughing at your own jokes," Col points out.

"Yeah, because I'm *funny*," Clay retorts.

"No, you're stupid," Col counters. "Big difference."

"Sapnap is a *bully*," Clay says, mostly for the benefit of the fans. "She is *bullying* me."

"Shut up," Col replies.

"See what I mean? *Bully* ."

---

Today is Saturday, and honestly, she's nervous to work on this stupid plug-in. It's giving her nightmares of code in her dreams.

Well, it *was* giving her nightmares. Before she met Georgie.

It should be two eras, really. BG and AG, standing for Before Georgie and After Georgie because those seem to be two different fucking worlds.

She tries not to be too distracted by Georgie and she calls Col and Darryl on Discord on their little private server.

"Hi!" Darryl says brightly. "How are you doing?"

"Tired," Col replies.

"Stressed. I have a video to edit for next week." Clay rubs her forehead a little. "And of course, homework. Did some of it last night but I definitely have some to do this weekend."

"That sucks," Darryl responds empathetically. "I can work alone today if you guys want."

"No," Col and Clay say, at slightly staggered times.

"Ok then. Let's get started?"

Testing is by far one of the more fun parts about this.

"Are we good?" Clay asks.

"No, the compass is spinning whenever you're in the Nether but we're not. It should be pointing to the last spot you were at," Col replies.

"More fixes?" Darryl asks.

"More fixes," Clay responds. "Though, I mean, it should only take a few adjustments."

---

They still have quite a bit to work out by the end of their working session, but it's a lot less than they had. That's good, at least.

Clay stares at her computer. Fuck, she forgot to take her Adderall today. She probably hyperfocused on the code or something. Ugh.

She rises out of her chair in order to walk into the kitchen. Nobody's there. Her mom is probably just up in the master bedroom, and her dad is working in his office. Probably.

Clay goes into the pantry and grabs a strawberry Pop Tart from the box. She pops it into the toaster and sets the toaster for a certain amount of time. Ok. She's hungry. Not that weird, though. From the fridge, she grabs raspberries. Clay puts them in a colander and washes them for a little bit, before taking a bowl out and putting the raspberries in that. Then, she grabs some water and one of her short-acting pills and she takes the pill with water.

The Pop Tart finishes in the toaster, and pops up with a *ding* . Clay takes it out of the toaster and sets it on a plate.



"Bon appetit," Clay says to herself glumly.

---

Clay wakes up and rolls over to her side table and picks her phone up. Her phone hasn't really blown up with notifications, but that's probably because she's turned most of them off.

She notices that she's received a message. From Georgie.

*good morning*

The timestamp is from 9:07 AM. She checks the time. 10:42. Ugh. She's really slept in today. Clay drafts a text.

*good morning! sriry for replying so late*

Seems ambiguous. Seems good. She sends it.

It seems like Clay's homework pile is neverending, but she knows that there shouldn't be too much left. Unless something sneaks up on her.

She gets out of bed and starts to plan her day.

---

Yeah, in hindsight, texting Georgie doesn't really help with homework.

Clay has finished two out of her four assignments, which seems good, but it's smaller, easier homework. She still has another chapter of her novel to write for Creative Writing, and she has a practice FRQ to write for AP Bio.

Technically, she's started on both of those assignments. But she keeps getting distracted. A new notification pops up on her phone. A text, from Georgie.

*i hate it. do you have any more?*

The "it" in question was a picture of Greg Heffley as Kirby. Clay smiles and texts back.

*no more kirby variants sadly*

She starts writing again on her stupid AP Bio FRQ. Ugh.

At least things will be easier for her in college?

---

They've already got quite the impressive conversation. Now, they're talking about music. That's something they do.

New notification from Georgie. Clay clicks it.

*do you like the clash?*

Clay clicks out a response.

*haven't gone thru their whole repertoire but i like a few of their songs*

She sends it. A text from Georgie quickly appears after.

*what's ur favorite?*

Clay responds.

*uh prob london calling ? on my playlist. wbu?*

New text.

*my favorite is london burning which is completely different. they sound lispy and completely high of their asses lmao*

Clay snickers a little bit. She sends another text.

*seems very floridian but w/o crappy rehab*

New text.

*eh they didn't go swimming with the gators*

Clay grins. She recalls a news story about that once. New text.

*i made that up.*

Oh. No, she definitely remembers that story. Maybe more.

*pretty sure that's real and there's multiple of those stories*

She sends the text. Not even two seconds later, Georgie replies.

*shouldn't be shocked about that. i am.*

Clay drafts a text.

*that's florida for you!*

Yeah, that's good. She sends it.

---

Her alarm rings at 6AM. On the dot.

Clay wants to ignore it at first. Getting up is such a chore.

Her sleep schedule was *fucked* during quarantine, but at least she got to wake up at a reasonable time. Like 9AM. Or 2PM.

But no, 6AM, like clockwork, every single weekday. She rolls over and gets out of bed.

Clay brushes her teeth and washes her face. It's nice. She feels less dead now.

She makes her bed and throws on some clothes. Today, it's a light green t-shirt with denim blue capris.

It doesn't get so cold in Florida as to justify a coat most of the time. Even when it snows, it usually melts because the day temperature is just not that cold. Perks of being so close to the equator.

She opens her windows. It's still dark outside, but that's probably going to change soon. The sun usually rises while she's waiting for the bus to come, if she goes on the bus.

She checks the clock. 6:23 AM. She probably still has enough time for breakfast.

Clay runs downstairs. She gets yogurt and some strawberries out of the fridge, as well as some milk for cereal. Worst comes to worst, she can drive to school.

She takes time carving her strawberries. It's almost robotic for her at this point, removing the core, slicing in half once, and then slicing in half again, repeating until she's done with all of the strawberries she wants. After that, she washes the strawberries and puts them in a bowl.

"Good morning!" Clay's mom says.

"Morning, mom," Clay replies.

Clay gets the cereal from a cabinet, and pours it into a bowl. Then, she gets the milk and pours it. Cereal always goes before milk. Just the correct way of things.

She sits down at the breakfast table and quickly eats her food.

"Have a good day at school," her mom says.

Clay stops before shoveling another spoonful of cereal into her mouth.

"Thanks, mom. Have a good day at work."

---

Today's the day. Fuck.

She has to read pages upon pages of lines. Act 1, Scenes 3 through 5.

Most of all, she has to pretend to kiss a guy.

She hasn't kissed a guy, well *anyone*, since Sam.

And well, Sam ended so damn catastrophically.

At first, it had started out well. They had been the typical high school couple, being cutesy and idyllic and all. They had done some things together. It was all good. Clay was happy.

Then, they grew less trusting of each other. It all came to a point where Clay found out that Sam was cheating.

"It's over," Clay had said. "Do you understand?"

Sam nodded.

That was the last time they had spoken. Well, Clay spoke. Sam didn't. A fucking nod. That's all he could spare.

Clay cried. She cried a lot. Not in front of everyone, but in front of Col and Darryl. A lot.

And now there's Georgie. There's a lot of differences between Sam and Georgie.

Yeah, she knows this is going to be a lot better than the last time.

---

"Act 1, Scenes 3 through 5!" Ms. Purcell announces dramatically. Well, it was good for that one person who wasn't at practice yesterday, Clay supposes.

Clay swallows saliva in her throat that she didn't even notice at first.

"Today is the day in which we introduce our Juliet, and where our Romeo meets our Juliet. Where star-crossed lovers find themselves for their first meeting. Our Tony to our Maria. And *et cetera*," Ms. Purcell says.

Yeah, okay. West Side Story. It's based off of Romeo and Juliet. Uh huh.

Act 1, Scene 3 is mostly where Juliet is introduced. Clay doesn't have that many lines here. Mostly affirmations or denials.

"I will need Lady Capulet, the Nurse, Juliet, and Peter," Ms. Purcell continues. "I hope that everyone is ready. For we will now begin."

"Nurse, where is my daughter?" the girl playing Lady Capulet says. Her name is Madison. Something like that. "Call her forth to me."

Clay grins. Col has a weird, funny part as the Nurse, being sort of comedic relief. Kind of strange to see Col being comic relief. Usually it's Clay, in the Clay-Col-Darryl dynamic of things.

"Now by my maidenhead at age twelve," Col calls out to the Lady Capulet. "I bade her come. What, lamb! What, ladybird! God forbid! Where's this girl? What, Juliet!"

Clay winces. Col can't just scream like that. Owch. But she has to stay on track.

"How now, who calls?" she tries.

It works well enough.

"Your mother." Col grins. Years of stupid *your mom* jokes made Clay invincible to this, however.

"Madam, I am here." Clay sighs, for effect. "What is your will?"

"This is the matter," Madison says assertively. "Nurse, give leave awhile. We must talk in secret."

There's a slight pause.

"Nurse, come back again. I have remembered me. Thou's hear our counsel. Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age," Madison adds.

The flow of this is so natural. It's nice, in a way. They're going back and forth, kind of like bantering. Except it's scripted.

"Faith. I can tell her age unto an hour!" Col exclaims.

"She's not fourteen."

"I'll lay fourteen of my teeth—and yet, to my teen be it spoken, I have but four—she is not fourteen," Col jokes. "How long is it now to Lammastide?"

"A fortnight and odd days," Madison says, dignified.

"Even or odd, of all days in the year, come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen. Susan and she - God rest all Christian souls! - were of an age. Well, Susan is with God. She was too good for me." Col pauses. "But, as I said, on Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen. That shall she. Marry, I remember it well. 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years, and she was weaned - I never shall forget it - of all the days of the year, upon that day. For I had then laid wormwood to my dug, sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall."

"My lord and you were then at Mantua. - Nay, I do bear a brain. - But, as I said, when it did taste the wormwood on the nipple of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool, to see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!" Col laughs. It seems so genuine. Even though the things she was saying were kind of weird. "'Shake!' quoth the dovehouse. 'Twas no need, I trow, to bid me trudge. And since that time it is eleven years, for then she could stand alone. Nay, by the rood, she could have run and waddled all about, for the day before she broke her brow."

Col's voice takes on a different tone at the end, a wistful tone. Clay doesn't know how she does it.

She catches herself spacing out. No. She's doing things today.

"And then my husband—God be with his soul! He was a merry man—took up the child. 'Yea,' quoth he, 'Dost thou fall upon thy face? Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit, Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holy dame, the pretty wretch left crying and said 'ay.' To see now, how a jest shall come about! I warrant, an' I should live a thousand years, I never should forget it. 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he."

Clay takes a deep breath and focuses back in on the scene.

---

"Act 1, Scene 5!" Ms. Purcell says. "Peter, servingmen, Capulet, Capulet's cousin, Tybalt, Lady Capulet, Juliet, Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio!"

Clay takes a deep breath. Ok. She can do this. She can act, right?

The scene starts with the kitchen staff, providing comedic relief.

Then, the ball really starts.

"Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes - ah, my mistresses! Which of you all unplugged with corns will walk a bout with you. - Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty, she, I'll swear, hath corns. Am I come near ye now? - Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day that I have worn a visor and could tell a whispering tale in a fair lady's ear such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone. - You are welcome, gentlemen. - Come, musicians, play," the guy playing Lord Capulet says.

No music plays, obviously.

Clay watches as some dialogue goes on. She doesn't have to pay full attention until Ethan starts talking.

"What lady is that which doth enrich the hand of yonder knight?" Ethan asks, as Romeo.

"I know not, sir," the servingman answers.

It's now a Romeo Rant. Clay remembers these from eighth grade. He speaks for way too long, and it's all about romance or despair or something like that. Maybe it's actually supposed to be called a sonnet. Whatever. Alliteration has a better twist to it.

"This, by his voice, should be a Montague. Fetch me my rapier, boy," Zak says as Tybalt. "What, dares the slave come hither, covered with an antic face, to fleer and scorn at our solemnity? Now, by the stock and honor of my kin, to strike him dead I hold it not a sin."

"Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm you so?" the guy who plays Capulet says. Clay can kind of remember his name now. James. Or Jamie. Something like that.

"Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe, a villain that is hither come in spite to scorn at our solemnity this night," Zak insists.

"Young Romeo is it?" Jamie asks.

"'Tis he, that villain Romeo." Zak scoffs. He's killing it as Tybalt. Shame that he's going to be killed.

"Content thee, gentle coz. Let him alone. He bears him like a portly gentleman, and, to say truth, Verona brags of him to be a virtuous and well-governed youth. I would not for the wealth of all the town here in my house do him disparagement," Jamie says, trying to calm Zak down.

Clay needs to start thinking of these people as characters. This is technically her family, after all. Well, for the play anyways.

"Therefore be patient. Take no note of him. It is my will, the which if thou respect, show a fair presence and put off these frowns, an ill-beseeming semblance for a feast," Capulet says serenely.

Clay looks through the pages. She doesn't have to pay attention for a while. That's fine.

She looks over at Georgie. Georgie seems invested in her lines, looking for when she's speaking.

"If I profane with my unworhiest hand this holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: my lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss," Romeo says.

Clay is nearly shocked, but she regains her composure.

"Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, which mannerly devotion shows in this, for saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, and palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss," Clay replies.

"Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?" Ethan shoots back. It reminds Clay of banter again. Except this isn't really banter that Clay would use on anybody.

"Ay, pilgrim," Clay responds, amused. "Lips that they must use in prayer."

"O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do. They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair," Romeo says.

"Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake."

"Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take." He pauses. Probably enough time for the kiss. "Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged."

Clay looks over at Georgie, right next to her.

She reads her next line.

"Then have my lips the sin that they have took." Clay smirks. She forgot how strange this dialogue was.

She sees Georgie swallow. And then Georgie looks back.

And for a second, they are lost in each others' eyes, until Clay has to speak again.

## Chapter End Notes

originally this was going to be a lot longer but i figured that some parts would fit better in the next chapter and that uh. i didn't want to postpone this by another day.  
thank you so much for reading! if you enjoyed, kudos and/or comment below!  
feel free to make predictions about what's going to happen next in the story.  
really hope the next update won't take as long hhh

# dreamt a dream tonight

## Chapter Summary

clay is missing something.

## Chapter Notes

sorry for not updating in so long! i have an online class and am currently having some medical problems (dw nothing serious or related to the pandemic), so it's taken me a little while to write this chapter, even though it's so short.

also so many people have been writing angst in this tag and so i present to you kind of fluffy material.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay gets to drive today.

So, she gets up extra early, eats some breakfast (but not too much), and makes sure to triple check that her keys were with her and everything.

Eh, quadruple check. Just in case.

Once Clay is absolutely sure that she has everything with her, she unlocks the car door and gets in the left front side of the car. It still has key ignition, so she puts that in and turns it.

The engine hums to life and a bunch of things start turning on and stuff.

Clay opens the garage door and backs out, making sure to not hit anything. Once she's out though, she's out. She closes the garage door, and drives down to Col's house.

---

"Good morning?" Col's sleepy voice says over the Bluetooth dialing system.

"You up?" Clay asks.

"I'm prepared to go to school physically." Col groans. "Not mentally, but that's fine."

"Should I pick you up then?" Clay responds.

"Yeah," Col answers after a pause. "God fuck. I had an all-nighter and I think I'm crashing from the caffeine."

"Col," Clay warns. "Are you sure that you shouldn't stay home?"

"Uh-huh." Col yawns. "Just sleeby. You know."

"Ok then," Clay says. "I'll pick you up. You can sleep in the front seat on the way to Darryl's but



after that you have to move to the back."

"Cool," Col replies.

Clay ends the call with the push of a button. Then, she pushes another one.

"Dial," she says, before saying Darryl's phone number to the car.

The car repeats the phone number, and then Clay says, "Dial."

The phone rings while she waits for Darryl. At the stop sign, she impatiently taps her fingers on the wheel, waiting for the car to go.

"Hi," Darryl says.

"Hi. I'm driving today," Clay replies.

"Why hello, driving today, my name is Darryl," Darryl jokes.

Clay grimaces.

"I'll pick you up after Col," she responds instead.

"Sounds good," Darryl says. He ends the call.

Clay pulls into Col's driveway. She gets out her phone and texts Col.

*get in loser we're going to school*

She sends it and then she unlocks her car. She gets out of the car, opens the trunk, and grabs a pillow for Col. Backpacks are bumpy, after all. She puts it in the back seat, since Col can probably reach it from where she would be. Clay gets back into the car and relocks it.

Col's side door opens, and Col steps out of it. Col does something with the door (she's probably locking it) and heads towards Clay's car. Clay quickly presses the unlock button, and Col opens the door, gets onto the seat, and closes the door.

"Thanks," Col says. She immediately flattens her seat all the way down and grabs the pillow that Clay put in the back seat. The pillow goes under her head.

Clay backs out of Col's driveway, making sure she doesn't hit a stray rabbit or garbage can. Then, she gets back onto the road.

Col is out already. It takes fifteen minutes for the average person to fall asleep, according to a fact Clay read when she was trying to sleep. Today, it probably took less than fifteen seconds for Col.

It's fine. Col barely snores. It's definitely not going to be audible over the sounds of the car. It's just more quiet, except Clay has to maintain some of it this time.

For some reason, things that you don't have an urge to do when you can do them appear with a strong urge when you cannot do them. It's a dumb brain thing that's stupid. Clay has an urge to play music or to talk or to just make noise. But she doesn't. Cause she doesn't need to. And that's fine.

She looks over at Col when she stops the car for the stop signs. Still sleeping.

Eventually, she pulls up to Darryl's house. She pats Col on the back. "Time to get up, sleepyhead," she says.

Col rubs her eyes, yawns, and stretches. "Thanks."

"No problem," Clay replies. "Lift up your seat."

Clay opens up her texting conversation with Darryl while Col puts the passenger seat in a sitting position, and shifts to the back.

*i'm here*

Darryl quickly comes outside after the fact.

"Good morning, muffins," he greets.

"Morning." Clay grins. "I need your parking pass."

He pulls it out. "I got it."

They talk a bit on their way to school. Mostly it's Darryl talking, what with Clay having to focus on the road and Col still being a little bit tired. It's good. It's fine. But Clay knows there's something she's missing.

---

"You need a ride?" Clay asks Georgie after practice is done. "Might be a bit packed, though. Sorry."

Today, they did Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2. The love scenes were a lot. She had a crapton of lines that she knows she has to memorize eventually. Not very exciting.

"I was just going to bike home today. Get some exercise," Georgie answers.

Clay's heart sinks.

"But I'll take you up on that offer today," Georgie continues.

Clay's heart rises again.

"Okay! Let me just get everyone and then we can all head there," Clay explains.

Col isn't too far away. Darryl stayed after school to do some homework, but he's been waiting for them for a while. Alec is near Darryl, on his phone.

"Alright, we're heading home," Clay says. "Darryl, this is Georgie. Georgie, this is my friend Darryl."

Darryl smiles. "Nice to meet you!"

"Nice to meet you too," Georgie says.

Clay figures that since there were so many people, it'd just be more convenient for her to pull up and pick all of them up.

"I'll pull up to the door here, and then you guys can get in the car there," she says.

Col gives a hum of acknowledgement, Alec nods, and Darryl gives her a thumbs up.

"Cool," Georgie says.

Clay goes out the door and then she locks her car so that she can hear the sound. She goes down the correct row of cars, and then finds hers. After, she unlocks the car so that she can get in. Then, she locks it and turns it on with the key, again. She turns the wheel so that she can back up, and she gets out of the space. She drives towards the door and she finds everybody standing outside, kind of spaced apart. She pulls up and unlocks the car.

Everybody gets in, eventually.

"Song suggestions, anybody?" Clay asks.

"The National Anthem of the USSR," Col replies, deadpan. "No. I don't really care that much."

Nobody else put any suggestions in.

"I'll just play my driving playlist," Clay says.

"Call Your Girlfriend" by Robyn starts playing when Clay shuffles the playlist.

---

"Bye Col, see you tomorrow!" Clay waves. "See you tomorrow." Col smiles. The car door closes.

"I haven't driven past your place, have I? Sorry if I have," Clay says to Georgie.

"No, it's about eleven kilometers from the school?" Georgie guesses.

Clay stares.

"Sorry. Forgot that you were American for a second." Georgie pulls out her phone. "Apparently it's about 6.83 miles from the school."

"I imagine things in relative distance, so like landmarks and stuff. I don't know the kilometer measure for that. Just the mile one," Clay replies.

"Ah, okay. It's near that diner with an old car on top. But you go a bit further and then there's a bunch of trees and stuff. That neighborhood," Georgie responds. "Once you're actually in, I'll tell you how to get there."

"Oh!" Clay realizes. "Yeah, I know where that is."

"Do you go to that diner often?" Georgie asks.

"When I was younger, we did. Not really now," Clay replies.

"I haven't been. Maybe we should go someday," Georgie remarks. Probably offhandedly. It still makes Clay's heart skip a beat.

"We should. They have really nice milkshakes and stuff," Clay says.

"That sounds nice," Georgie replies.

"It is." Clay smiles at Georgie. And Georgie smiles back.

Clay looks away. She has to, because otherwise she's going to crash into something.

Well, that's what the logical part of her brain is telling her.

Everything else is telling her that Georgie's smile is so bright, radiating warmth and heat like the sun, but somehow also giving relief like cold ice cream on a hot day or shelter in a storm.

She doesn't want to look stupid, though. So maybe that's why she really looked away.

"Any other local restaurant recommendations?" Georgie asks.

"Quite a few," Clay says. "Pick a style."

"I've been craving Indian food," Georgie replies. "Haven't had it since I left home."

Clay furrows her eyebrows.

"I think there's a few places, but this isn't the best place for Indian restaurants," Clay responds after a few seconds. "Florida has a cuisine that it's stolen too, though. Cuban cuisine."

"Is it good?" Georgie asks.

"I think it is." Clay grins. "Whether you decide that it's good is your choice."

"Sounds nice." Georgie scrunches up her nose, which is actually trying to make Clay die. It's adorable and Georgie's just so pretty. "Wait, what is Cuban cuisine?"

"Really fucking good," Clay replies. "Lots of plantains, meat, and then there's dessert."

"Never had plantains before. They're like bananas, right?" Georgie is looking at Clay and honestly it's so much.

"Yeah, they're like bananas," Clay says quickly and in one breath.

On the right side of the car, Clay sees the diner appear.

"Can you give me directions from here?" Clay asks.

"Sure," Georgie answers.

---

"What are they serving again today?" Clay asks.

"It's nuggie day, baby!" Col answers. Clay and Darryl both snicker a little bit.

"I'll consider it," Clay responds.

"Chimken nuggie," Col says, before dying of laughter.

Clay and Darryl laugh too. It's funny, after all.

"I'm going to get a muffin," Darryl says.

"Pardon?" Clay asks.

"Like a literal muffin, you muffin," Darryl replies. "Going to be banana chocolate chip."

"Yeah, the banana chocolate chip muffins are good," Col says.

"Actually, I have a question for you," Clay states suddenly. She's nervous now. She's going to forget what she rehearsed in her head earlier in the day. Fuck.

"Mhm?" Col responds.

"Can we invite Georgie to the table?"

It's out of her mouth. She's said it. Her fate is up to the gods.

"I don't see why not," Darryl says. "She seemed to be really chill yesterday."

"I like her," Col adds. "Surprised at your chemistry, to be honest."

Clay blushes. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know." Col grins evilly. "The chemistry of your *friendship* ."

She says friendship with an added exaggeration. Could she know? No. Unless?

Darryl doesn't say anything. He probably doesn't notice.

"Cool then," Clay says, kind of nervously. "I'll text her later."

## Chapter End Notes

so originally this was supposed to be in chapter four but i was like "bro i do NOT want to write this rn" so i wrote it for this chapter instead  
anyways, if you enjoyed, make sure to kudos (if you haven't already) and comment below! would love to see your predictions and also interacting with people over fic is awesome.  
socials are on my profile if you want to geek w me (other than here, i use discord the most)!

## how now, who calls

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay's nervous.

She's nervous and she knows why.

There's this feeling that she has when she's around Georgie. It doesn't just feel like butterflies.

It feels like her soul is on fire and drowning at the same time. It feels like she's drunk and high without taking anything. It feels like something new and coming home. It feels like everything she knows now. It feels like nothing she's really ever felt before.

And she thinks she knows what to call it.

*Love.*

The word itself makes Clay sharply inhale. After all, does she know what love is? Can she really ever?

But, she thinks, this is probably it.

So the fact that Georgie is coming into a more intimate part of her life just makes Clay nervous.

How much can she open her heart before somebody sees everything inside?

Hopefully, this much.

---

"I fucking hate this school's idea of macaroni and cheese," Col complains as she sits down.

"Language," Darryl scolds.

"Sorry, *Bad* ." Col's eyes twinkle.

"Oh, that's it, you little muffin," Darryl replies.

Clay snickers a little bit.

"Guys," she says.

"Oh, right. Best behavior for Georgie," Col replies. She salutes.

Georgie's walking over. Clay tries to calm herself down. She doesn't know if it's working.

"Hey," Georgie says. She sits down next to Clay.

Clay hopes that Georgie can't hear or feel how Clay's heart is beating right now. It's hammering, almost like the only thing she can hear.

"Hi!" Clay says brightly. "Welcome to the table."

"Welcome," Col and Darryl echo.

"Welcome?" Is there a ritual I need to complete to fully become part of the table?" Georgie jokes.

"Yes, you need to drink our blood and we need to drink yours," Col replies. She blinks, as to say that she isn't joking, even though she definitely is.

Clay laughs and Georgie joins in. Darryl laughs a little bit too, but he gives them a concerned look.

---

*can i get a room tour?*

Clay looks at Georgie's text. She grins and responds.

*not until you come in person*

She exits out of the messaging app and opens Discord. She then goes into the private server that she shared with Darryl and Col.

**Sapnap**

yuhh get into it

**BadBoyHalo**

I have that stuck in my head kindly never say that again

Under Darryl's most recent message, Col had reacted with the emojis for "n" and "o."

**Dream**

are we streaming tonight?

**Sapnap**

idk i finished all of my hw tho

**BadBoyHalo**

Just finished an essay in german about german pop culture

**BadBoyHalo**

Minecraft would be much appreciated

**Dream**

yikes

**Dream**

hypixel, survival world, or

**Sapnap**

idc

**BadBoyHalo**

Would prefer survival world but hypixel is fine too

**Dream**

okay

New text message from Georgie. She opens it up.

*anyways wyd*

Clay grins. She drafts a response.

*nothing rlly rn, just vibing. hbu?*

Send.

Clay gets up from her bed and turns on her computer. It's 9:03 PM right now. Not too late.

The computer goes through the whole startup animation, which is good. No pressure for her to update anything. Also good.

Her phone buzzes. She checks it. A new text from Georgie.

*also just vibing. still craving indian food but*

Clay grins. She sends another message.

*well we're kind of close to the big cities, i'm sure there's some there*

New text message from Georgie.

*also, the nearest nando's is in virginia. this is so depressing*

Hm. What's a "nando's?"

Turns out, Nando's means "Nando's Peri-Peri Chicken," a South African chain restaurant with locations mostly near the capital of the US, but with some in Illinois for some reason.

Clay drafts a text.

*if we flew out to the nando's with the least expensive flight and least amount of taxes would u be happy?*

She deletes the text.

New ping from Discord. Probably just an accidental ping from one of the fan channels or whatever.

**Sapnap**



@Dream get online u loser

## **Dream**

sorry just a sec

Clay launches Minecraft, and joins their multiplayer survival world. Then, she goes onto Teamspeak to join Darryl and Col.

"What were you even doing?" Col asks.

"I was busy," Clay replies defensively. "Snapmap."

Col hits Clay in game.

"Quit it, muffins," Darryl says, jokingly.

"Okay, let me start streaming," Clay responds.

She goes onto Twitch and sets up her stream and stream settings.

"Hi, everyone! Today, we're probably just going to be chilling in our survival world while we try to gather things to beat the Wither," Clay says.

Her chat blows up.

**babiefly:** speedrun but ur speedrunning to beat the wither ???

**Tiredmonkie41:** OMG Hi Dream!!

**sugarhex592:** when u made it on time to a dream stream

**Macaroni42593:** Dream literally brightened up my day

**DayDreamBeliever420:** Time for filling the void with media instead of sleeping

**Snapplecoffee:** simp! @sugarhex592

**cwiggle34:** bruh it is 1:02am and i'm going to watch this anyways

**Dreamplushiepls:** Day 42 of asking Dream for marshmallow plushie merch

**sapnapsingingstan:** poggers in the chat!

**sugarhex592:** am not simp. how rude @Snapplecoffee

Clay looks away from her chat.

"I'm on villager trades," Col says. "See you suckers later, I'm going to be wrangling with making a villager breeder."

"The humanity," Clay jokes.

"They're going to rise up against us. We're going to be stuck in a Minecraft world like in those Minecraft fiction books, and we're going to die," Darryl adds. "Do you not see the consequences of your actions?"

"You guys have officially made me lose my marbles!" Col jokes, as a reference to the meme.

" **IHeartSallythecat** has donated \$1.44. Ily Dream," a metallic voice says. The text-to-speech reader. She doesn't know whether to turn it off or not yet, but she's not going to for now.

"Thank you, person who likes Sally the Cat," Clay replies.

"Ok, so now that you're on villager duty, I'm going to try to resurrect and rebat the Ender Dragon for more experience points, so that I can enchant everyone's armor," she continues.

"Can't wait for projectile projection four," Darryl says.

"I'm not *that* mean, Darryl," Clay replies. "I'm considering whether to give blast protection or normal protection though, because of the Wither."

"Eh, probably just normal protection, if you're adding the mending books on there," Darryl says.

"Darryl, what are you doing?" Clay asks.

"I am currently killing cows and waiting for the sugarcane and wheat to grow so that we can make as many books for our bookshelves as possible. Once I get around two stacks of books, I'm moving to the raid village so that we can farm totems of undying," Darryl responds.

Clay stops in her sand collection to clap. "Very impressive."

" **Anonymous** just donated \$3!" the metallic text-to-speech voice says.

"Thanks, anonymous person," Clay replies.

A few seconds later, Clay gets a text from Georgie.

*you're very welcome*

That wasn't something she was accepting. She's gotten a stack of sand, which is more than enough for what she needs. She goes back to the base, where there are a bunch of furnaces. There's already coal in each of the furnaces, so she just spreads out the stack of sand into six different furnaces, sixteen per furnace.

Clay goes to her phone.

*i'm giving you the \$3 back then*

A new text from Georgie appears.

*no don't :(*

Clay replies.

*you regularly watch twitch?*

New text.

*usually stream a bit more but kinda. stick figure w piss yellow bg was very funny for me*

Piss yellow? Clay responds.

*it's neon green*

Another text.

*i'm colourblind.*

Oh. That makes a lot of sense. She texts back.

*oh ok! sriry. uh i have to get back to the stream now.*

New text from Georgie.

*no it's all good! have fun.*

---

"So, we're good?" Clay asks.

They're currently working on the Minecraft Manhunt plugin. They've tested it over and over again, with individual parts of the challenge.

"I think so, yeah!" Darryl answers excitedly.

Clay leans back in her chair. "I can't believe it."

"Me neither," Col comments. "We're finally done."

Clay exhales. It's a breath that she thinks she's been holding in for weeks.

"So, should we test it?" she asks.

"We're the masters of it, right? We should get somebody else to test it," Col responds.

"I guess." Clay sinks her shoulders.

"Does Georgie play Minecraft?" Darryl asks. "We should ask her."

"I think so," Clay responds. "But I don't know."

This is going to be so weird. How could she phrase this?

"Hi," she could say. "*My friends and I coded this thing for Minecraft and I was wondering if you could test it with me.*"

That sounds *so* dumb.

"I mean, we're masters at the parts, not the whole, right?" Col says.

Col knows. She knows for sure. Clay could sob right now, but she knows.

"Yeah," Darryl replies. "We can test it out, see how it goes. And then we could record, too."

Clay looks at the ceiling, stretching back in her chair.

"One of you two will need to edit," she says. "I haven't edited the video with Col yet."

"That's fine," Darryl responds. "I can edit."

"Thanks," Clay says.

"But seriously, I think that inviting Georgie is a good idea," Darryl adds.

Clay sputters.

---

"What do you want for dinner?" Clay's mom asks.

Clay stops focusing on that one spot on the wall that seems to capture her focus for some reason.

"Uh, I don't know," she replies. "Probably whatever you want."

"Can you go ask your dad what he wants?" Clay's mom says.

"Sure." Clay gets off of the couch and heads towards her dad's office area.

"Hey," her dad greets. Clay walks into the room, making sure to be wary of any wires.

"What are you doing?" she asks, standing next to her dad.

"Nothing much," he responds. "Just some things for clients."

"Mom wanted me to ask you what you wanted for dinner. We're ordering out," she says suddenly.

"Any restaurant, any specific cuisine?"

"Tacos sound good?" he replies. "I can pick it up."

"Yeah," she says. "Can I come with you?" "Sure," her dad responds. He gets out of his chair and Clay walks out, her dad behind her.

She goes back to the living room, sitting on the couch where she was before. Her dad sits on the sofa, next to her mom.

"Do tacos sound good? From that *taqueria* on Rebecca Boulevard?" he says. "I'll pick it up."

"Sure," her mom replies. "Clay, your usual?"

Clay nods in affirmation.

Her mom places the order on the phone, and everything is ready to go.

---

"Dad, do you want me to drive or do you want to drive?" Clay asks.

"I'll drive," he replies. He unlocks the car and opens the garage door.

"Okay," Clay responds, heading towards the car. She gets in the passenger seat in the front and straps her seatbelt.

Her dad gets in the driver's seat and straps his seatbelt on. He sets the keys in the cupholder and presses the engine button. In her opinion, Clay prefers having the key ignition, but to each their own. The wheel pops up towards her dad. He adjusts the seat in the car and Clay does the same, realizing that her knees are too close to the glove compartment.

"How's that play that you're in?" her dad asks. "Is it fun?"

"It's good," she answers. "Lots of fun."

"Good," her dad replies. "Glad to see you out of the house once in a while."

Clay raises her eyebrows at her dad. "I go out of the house plenty."

"On the weekdays," her dad clarifies. "It's good to see you not swamped with homework."

Clay nods. "I'm not too swamped with homework now."

"That's good," her dad replies.

"Mhm," Clay says.

She turns on the radio. It's set to 90.7, WMFE. The NPR station for Orlando.

The time is 4:28 PM.

Right now, the host is giving the time, traffic lowdown, and ads for whoever supports the station. It's a spiel Clay's heard thousands of times before.

"Welcome to American Variety Radio. I'm your host, Court Lewis. This week, we're going to investigate a dark and disturbing subject from Florida's past: the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee, commonly known as the Johns Committee. A committee established for terrible reasons, that failed in those terrible reasons, so they went to even more terrible reasons. Even those of us who were alive during this time may not remember this committee, but we seek to bring this committee to the spotlight again."

---

Clay eats her tacos in relative silence.

Her parents are in their respective spaces, her mom in the living room, her dad in his office. She has her headphones in, listening to music.

"They took the credit for your second symphony, rewritten by machine on new technology, and now I understand the problems you can see," the male voice sings.

Depressing, in a strange way. If Clay had to write an essay on it, it would probably be about how the American psyche had flitted from one form of media to the next, from radio to television to now the advent of the Internet.

But Clay doesn't have to write an essay on it. Which is a good thing.

This entire play thing has been strange for Clay. Especially with the BG and AG thing, Before Georgie and After Georgie. Two eras of her life.

Feelings are weird, Clay decides. She takes another bite of her taco. It's good.

But would it be better if it was with someone else?

## Chapter End Notes

oh, my lesbians.

it is a SIN how long it took me to get out this chapter i am sorry :c

i had to do a bit of research for segments closer towards the end and that always takes a little bit of time, but hey at least i got to do research for an entire block of dialogue not three words (-glares @ other fanfic on my main-)

kudos (if you haven't already) and comment below if you enjoyed the story or anything i did!

socials are in my profile.

# for saints have hands that pilgrims touch

## Chapter Notes

i am so sorry that it took this long to produce a chapter. i just was really unsatisfied by endings at some points, so i just kept continuing until i felt i had a somewhat satisfactory ending.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Clay lies on her bed, staring at the ceiling.

" *Touché, touché, touché, touché* ," Christine and the Queens sings on "Girlfriend." Clay mouths the words, still just being there. Christine's voice fades out, still singing the word *touché* over and over again.

"A Living Machine (In Your Body Waiting)" by Adore, 1996 is next on the shuffle.

Clay is ready for nothing. Absolutely nothing. It's 3:49 AM, early Monday morning. She shifts her arm a little on the bed, but then she focuses on the ceiling again.

" *Did you laugh when you woke up?* " he asks. " *Were you laughing like I was?* "

Clay considers playing with Patches. It's too early for that. So she just stares. The stare is devoid of any focus. It's like sleeping, except she can't sleep.

" *Did you laugh when you woke up? Were you laughing with me too?* "

There's nothing she can really do until she wakes up. And then there's school. And then there's everything at school. And then there's practice. And there, she'll find Georgie.

" *Did you laugh when you woke up? Like I do when I'm with you.* "

---

"Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger, this is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die," Clay says.

That is it. It is the last line of this play that she will ever have to say. For this time.

Now, she can stop focusing on this. She can stop being nervous of this. She just has to learn and memorize all of this. Fuck. She probably still needs to be nervous.

"A glooming peace this morning with it brings. The sun for sorrow will not show his head. Go hence to have more talk of these things. Some shall be pardoned, and some punished. For never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo," Dave ends.

Clay can almost hear a collective sigh of relief throughout the room.

"Well?" Ms. Purcell says. "We've done it!"

Her helpers start clapping and soon people are cheering and it's such a noise that Clay can only get caught up in it and join, cheering and clapping and just being *happy* .

Ms. Purcell makes a motion to stop.

"There is still a lot of work to do, work that unfortunately cannot be done in just one hour," she says. "There is memorization and the *acting*. But, good job for today."

Clay glances at the clock in the room. 4:28 PM. Ms. Purcell is still talking. Clay tunes her out.

Col looks at her. Everybody is ready to leave, the room is almost *buzzing* with energy, and they just want to leave.

Eventually, the clock senses it and Ms. Purcell allows everybody to leave, filing out of the two sets of doors towards the cafeteria.

"Hey," Georgie says, startling Clay. "I'm going to bike home. I kind of need it."

Clay feels... disappointed. That's all she can describe feeling.

"Oh, okay," Clay replies. "I hope you enjoy it."

"I'll try," Georgie responds.

They both snicker a little bit, but Clay can't help but feel that this is a façade.

And they have to walk away from each other.

---

It's stupid, kind of, how much Clay is stuck on Georgie. But it's stupid in a good way, right?

At least, that's what Clay's going to say for now.

"Breakfast for lunch," Col interrupts. "I hope you enjoy barely-crisp french toast and mediocre pancakes."

""If I'm going to have those, I can just bring the microwaveable ones. At least those taste good," Clay replies.

Today, Clay has a microwaveable pizza and a banana from lunch. The pizza is small enough to fit in her lunchbox, but it's filling nonetheless.

"Ooh, high fructose corn syrup?" Darryl jokes. "Sign me up."

"Overpriced, per always." Col sighs in exasperation.

"Hey Col, can you watch my shit for me?" Clay asks.

"Sure," Col responds as Darryl says, "Language!"

Clay heads to the microwave with only her pizza in hand. She sees Georgie sit down at the lunch table. Next to Clay's spot, like Georgie has been doing. Clay can see Georgie's face.

Georgie seems to be talking to Col and Darryl. Her pizza seems to be heating up.

Then, Georgie waves.

It's so goofy. Clay wants to wave back, but it'll look so stupid. But that's the extent of their emotional contact, so she gives a small little wave back.



It's worth all of the potential humiliation to see Georgie beam, as bright as the sunlight.

Clay grins back.

The microwave beeps, bringing Clay out of her harsh reality. Luckily, there's no line for the microwave to see her being weird. That's weird. There's almost *always* a line for the microwave. Oh well. It works out in her favor, as she can slowly get her things set.

She balances her pizza on the way back to the table, attempting not to hit anybody.

"Hi," Georgie says.

"How was your day?" Clay asks.

"Would've been good if it weren't for this soggy french toast," Georgie complains. "Just kidding. But you do have some more restaurant recommendations, right?"

Col gives Clay *a look* while eating a bite of pancakes. Clay gives a dismissive glance back at Col and Col raises her eyebrows. They've become better and better at nonverbal communication over the years.

"Yeah, a few," Clay says. "How about you guys?"

---

"Today, you have been brought to this stage," Ms. Purcell says. "Seeing that our first reading was such a success, we shall do it here, but with cues and other things instead. I will also point out things that could be done better."

Okay. They're in the auditorium, which isn't actually too big, but it feels enormous with the high ceiling and the red ceiling. It's probably the definition of high school grandeur.

"Narrator, for the prologue."

"Two households both alike in dignity, in fair Verona where we set our scene. From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. From forth the fatal loins of these two foes a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; whose misadventured piteous overthrows doth with their death bury their parents' strife. The fearful passage of their death-marked love and the continuance of their parents' rage, which, but their children's end, naught could remove, is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; the which, if you with patient ears attend, what here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend," the boy, George, reads from the script.

"Can you try and be more dynamic? Add tones to your voice in certain places. Some emotion," Ms. Purcell asks. "From the top."

"Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona where we set our scene." George takes a breath. He continues announcing, "From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. From forth the fatal loins of these two foes a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; whose misadventured piteous overthrows doth with their death bury their parents' strife..."

He's adding emotion now. Clay can kind of feel it. The tone has the formality of an announcer while still adding feeling. But Shakespearian.

The prologue is over soon enough. Then it's the fight. Act 1, Scene 1.

When Georgie says, "Part, fools," Clay can feel her mouth getting dry.

She's just so pretty. Especially when she's concentrated. Clay can't see everything from the seats, but she can see a few things, like the way Georgie's eyebrows furrow at certain parts. It's too much.

But if she's already dipped her toes, why not go all of the way in?

---

Clay wishes she could say she's slept far better since yesterday.

She wakes up at 4:23 AM, for no reason at all. And no matter how hard she tries, she can't go back to sleep. But it's too comfortable for her to get up.

So she lies in bed listening to music like yesterday.

When she hits shuffle, "A Burning Hill" by Mitski starts to play.

*" Today I will wear my white button-down, I'm tired of wanting more. I think I'm finally worn. "*

She skips it.

It's not because she doesn't like the song. She does. Or she did. But she doesn't want to remember everything. And she doesn't want to cry, even though it's just almost 4:30 AM.

*"I had a thought, dear, however scary about that night, the bugs and the dirt. "*

Hozier. "Like Real People Do."

*" Why were you digging? What did you bury before those hands pulled me from the earth? "*

Clay listens to the lyrics, tries to understand them.

*" I will not ask you where you came from, I will not ask and neither should you. Honey, just put your sweet lips on my lips. We should just kiss like real people do. "*

As the high voices in the background sing and the guitar plays, Clay *understands* . She knows what this is about. She wants the same thing to happen in real life. There's already those components. *I will not ask you where you came from.*

Well, Clay had asked *where* Georgie had come from. But she's not going to ask about Georgie's past. That's not for Clay to ask. That's for Georgie to say on her own terms. And maybe one day, Clay will be able to ask because she'll reach that boundary. Maybe.

*"I knew that look, dear: eyes always seeking, was there in someone that dug long ago. So I will not ask you why you were creeping. In some sad way, I already know. "*

That restlessness Georgie has. Clay feels it too, and maybe it's not just the ADHD, it's the adrenaline she's feeling.

Clay can feel tears escaping from her eyes. But these are good tears.

*" So I will not ask you where you came from, I would not ask and neither would you. Honey, just put your sweet lips on my lips. We should just kiss like real people do. "*

They should just kiss like real people do. It'd be tentative but soft.

*" I could not ask you where you came from, I could not ask and neither could you. Honey, just put your sweet lips on my lips. We could just kiss like real people do. "*

It would be amazing, no, *perfect* .

Clay's heart aches.

---

"Today, we will be discussing a few things you can do to improve your writing," Mrs. Sanchez announces. "Your novels are going wonderfully for the most part, but there's just a few things that you guys need to improve."

Yeah, there are quite a few things Clay needs to do, like learn how to not break off into tangents *à la* Victor Hugo.

"You've all heard the classic writing advice of 'Show Not Tell.'" Nods of agreement come from the students, including Clay. Mrs. Sanchez continues, "But showing and telling gives a good way for backstory. After all, if you insert a character from the middle of nowhere in the middle of a book that is purely symbolic, it may be too late. Putting that character in somebody else's thoughts, like your protagonist's, might help the reader in explaining certain plot points. Of course, you don't want to give your main conflict away. However, if you introduce a character by telling how you met as well as showing them at the moment you are writing them, you can add lots more to a story. If a character is in conflict or traumatized by plots happening before the story you write starts, you can show it and tell it. If a character who has experienced anaphylactic shock due to a severe bee allergy is agoraphobic, explain why and also give the backstory. Does that make sense?"

"Yes," a chorus of voices, including Clay's, echo back.

"Good. Can somebody give me a example?"

No raised hands. It takes a little bit of time to think, but after a few minutes, Mrs. Sanchez just picks someone.

"Clay?"

Wonderful.

"If, uh, somebody is scared to go into a relationship at least partly because of an experience in a past one, that can be shown and told, instead of just shown," Clay replies.

Nobody has to know that it's not a story. Nobody has to know that it's real.

"Good," Mrs. Sanchez says. "Ryan?"

---

Clay walks into the auditorium. Everybody's already sitting with their friends but she can't find Col or Georgie. So she sits down in a random seat that's not really close to anybody but close enough to the door.

She checks her phone.

"Hey, can I sit here?" somebody asks.

"Sure," she replies. She looks up.

Zak. The guy who plays Tybalt. He's sitting near Clay, probably not enough to warrant asking. It

doesn't really matter.

"So, I don't really know how to approach this," Zak says.

Clay tilts her head and furrows her brows.

"I think we, uh, we play Minecraft together," he continues.

"Okay?" she responds.

"Like, through Darryl and stuff," he adds.

"Cool. You want my Discord or something?" she asks.

"Yeah, let's exchange," he replies.

So, Clay gives hers, and Zak sends a friend request. She accepts it. Skeppy. Yeah, she's definitely seen that name before.

Col and Georgie arrive soon enough.

---

"Are you hungry at all?" Clay asks.

Clay's dropped everybody off except for Georgie, and they're just going towards Georgie's house.

"A little bit," Georgie responds. "Should we go to that diner near my place?"

"Yeah," Clay says. "My treat."

"I have all of these American dollars and you're not even letting me spend them," Georgie replies. "Awfully rude."

"Guess I'll have to be. If you really want, you can pay next time." Clay swallows. Is this a date? She doesn't know.

"*Fine*." Georgie takes out her phone. "Let me text my parents that I'll be kind of late going home, though."

"Sure." Clay keeps her eyes focused on the road, making sure that she doesn't crash or anything. That would suck.

"Alright, they're good with it," Georgie replies.

"Cool." Clay shifts lanes to the right, making sure she doesn't hit anything or do anything wrong.

They drive in relative silence until Clay pulls into the parking space.

"You ready for the coolest milkshake you've ever had?" Clay asks.

"Extremely ready for diabetes," Georgie responds. "Nah, I'm ready."

They head inside.

"If You Leave" by Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark is playing throughout the diner. The diner is kind of 50s inspired, but there are touches of modernity everywhere, including with the picture of

the burger with a pride flag on the toothpick, displayed along the sandwich with the American flag on the toothpick.

"Do we just sit down?" Georgie asks.

"Yeah," Clay replies.

They get a two person booth, sitting across from each other. The milkshake menu is already there, waiting for them.

"What are the size of these things, again?" Georgie's eyes widen, probably from things on the menu. "Jesus Christ, rhubarb and oreo."

Clay tries to measure it with her hands. "About this big. And don't knock it until you try it."

"Ok, that's a lot. Can we just share?"

Clay tries not to freak out. It's fine, they're just friends, sharing a milkshake. Completely and totally fine. No homo!

"Sure, I don't mind." She does mind. But it's not bad. "What do you want?"

"Are you allergic to anything?" Georgie asks.

"Not that I know of," Clay replies.

"Let's get the cereal milk milkshake of the day," Georgie says.

"Sure," Clay responds.

"How are you guys doing today?" their server asks. She has straight red hair and brown eyes, as well as light freckles dotting her cheeks.

"Good, how about you?" Clay asks. After all, manners are important.

"I'm doing well, thank you," their server replies. "What would you two like today?"

"What's the cereal milk of the day?"

"Let me check." Their server flips through some things. "Honeycomb."

Clay gives a look towards Georgie asking for approval, and Georgie nods.

"Could we have that as a milkshake?" Clay asks.

"Anything else?" the server asks.

"No, we're all good," Georgie responds suddenly. "Thank you."

"God, I feel like that one John Mulaney skit," Clay says. "'Should we order fries for the table?'"

"I know *you'll* have fries if we order some," Georgie continues.

The song fades from "If You Leave" to something else.

*"Take me now baby, here as I am. Pull me close, try and understand. Desire is hunger is the fire I breathe. Love is a banquet on which we feed."*

"My mum *loves* this song," Georgie says. "She always sings to it in the car."

"And do you like it?" Clay asks.

"It's good, I guess," Georgie replies.

"Nice." Clay feels the drop in the conversation, and she wants to say something, but she doesn't want to ruin anything.

" *Because the night belongs to lovers, because the night belongs to lust. Because the night belongs to lovers, because the night belongs to us* ," Georgie sings.

"You have a nice voice," Clay says, because it's true.

There's a slight hint of a blush on Georgie's face. "Thank you."

---

Their milkshake comes, and it's decadently decorated.

"Clay, you underestimated," Georgie says.

"I gave you a perfect estimate of the glass," Clay replies, pretending to be offended.

"Fine," Georgie concedes. "But what about all of the stuff on top?"

"We said that we'd share for a reason, right?" Clay responds.

"Y-yeah," Georgie stutters. She grabs a straw and stabs through the paper, taking it out.

Clay does the same, and she bends it slightly. When she places it in the milkshake, she doesn't have to do anything but sip, while Georgie has to fumble a little bit with her straw.

"Mm," Georgie says. "This is good."

"Told you so." Clay grins.

The whipped-cream veil disappears and they can see each other while they sip on the milkshake. It feels intense. Clay could keep staring into those eyes forever, but really, she just wants to kiss the lips that are currently on the straw, sipping that milkshake. She wants to wake up in the morning to that face, she's either going to crash and burn or keep the fire steady and she can't decide which.

Clay can't shake those thoughts out of her head. Georgie looks serene, really. So what can Clay do except to keep falling?

## Chapter End Notes

is clay a simp or a useless lesbian? idk.

anyways! i've switched my tumblr to @que-sera-sera, so go follow that if you haven't already. highkey considering posting these like scam clips (i.e. a little bit of the story at a time on tumblr and then putting the whole chap on ao3) but idk.

kudos and comment if you enjoyed please !!

## do not swear by anything

### Chapter Notes

slight sickness and covid tw after the "us history" part, slight illness tw after that part  
but no covid tw

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"So, uh. I like someone," Clay confesses.

So yeah, Clay and Georgie had shared a milkshake earlier. Completely no homo. It was just a thing that they did because of the size of the milkshake.

"Who?" Col and Darryl both demanded, their voices made quieter by the fact that they spoke at similar times.

"Jesus, I need a minute. It's... your mom," Clay replies in a sad tone.

"Ew," Darryl immediately says.

"Fucking hell, Clay," Col responds. "Give us a real answer."

"Language!" Darryl immediately reminds Col.

"We're on a Discord call, Darryl," Col says exasperatedly. "Who is it, really?"

"Ok, fine. It's Georgie." Clay sighs.

"Oh! She seems really nice," Darryl replies. "Good for you!"

"You couldn't tell?" Col asks.

Clay blushes. She has an urge to cover it, even though they aren't video calling.

"I'm not around you guys," Darryl retorts.

"Fair." Col pauses and then Clay hears something set down. Probably whatever Col is drinking.

"And something happened, earlier today," Clay continues. "We went to that diner - you know, the one with an old car on top - and we shared a milkshake."

"So," Col says, the distinct sounds of her nails tapping on her desk being picked up through the mike, "You told us you liked her, not that you were dating."

"Because we're not," Clay counters.

"That sounds like a thing you do in a romantic relationship," Darryl adds.

"No!" Clay retorts. "It's just that she's not used to American portioning yet so we just shared one out of convenience."



"Mhm," Col responds. "Did you ask her or did she ask you?"

"She asked me, but do you really think she likes me back?" Clay bites her lip, and then stops once she notices. That's a really bad tic that she needs to focus on.

"Yes," Col and Darryl say at similar times, their voices being carried at different rates.

"I don't know." Clay sighs again. "Every time that we do something kind of close, she kind of pulls away."

"Maybe she's nervous," Darryl suggests.

"Fuck, you're right," Clay admits. "Maybe I'm taking this too fast, maybe I'm pushing her too much-"

"No," Col interrupts. "Maybe she's scared she's doing the things you're doing. Maybe you're both retreating. You need to be direct."

"Okay, Ms. *Sapnap*," Clay responds. "Ms. Sapnap who could barely hold conversations with her crush last year. I will be direct."

"Do what I say, not what I do," Col groans. "We're stupid human beings with stupid impulses but those stupid impulses make us the humans that we are."

"Yeah, I guess." Clay looks at the time. "Guys, it's 1:23."

"So?" Col responds. "We've stayed up a lot later than this before."

"I'm tired," Clay finds herself finally saying. "Night guys."

"G'night," Darryl responds.

"See you tomorrow," Col replies.

They all quit the calls at similar times.

---

Clay is tired. She's so tired from yesterday and honestly she's in no state to be driving today.

She sends a text message to Darryl.

*bus or car ??*

He replies moments later.

*Driving today*

She doesn't want to sleep on the bus with its migraine causing shaking. So she responds.

*can u pls pick me up*

Darryl sends a thumbs up in reply.

Clay brings a small little pillow that she can sleep on and then leave in her backpack.

New notification. Text from Georgie.

*good morning!*

Clay smiles and texts back.

*morning <3*

Shit, is that too personal? She deletes the heart and replaces it with an exclamation mark. Okay. She can send it.

Clay flops back onto her bed. New notification from Darryl.

*I'm here*

She takes her phone and goes down the stairs. She checks to see that her backpack is packed, which it is. Clay picks it up and puts it on her back.

Clay opens the door to the garage, and then the garage door. She closes the door to the garage and then walks outside. She presses the button on her garage door remote.

Darryl is staring at her, waiting for her.

She opens the car door, gets in, and shuts it. Clay takes off her backpack and puts it on the floor of the car.

"You look dead," Darryl remarks.

"Thanks," Clay mumbles. She clicks on her seatbelt and reaches for the pillow in her backpack.

"Are you OK?" Darryl asks. His hands are on the wheel but they're not moving.

"Not sure, honestly." She grabs the pillow and zips her backpack shut. "On one hand, I feel like I'm f- just flying. On the other, I feel like I'm chained to a 200 pound metal ball."

"That's no good," Darryl says. He backs up, looking at the mirror and back windshield to probably make sure that he doesn't crash into anything.

Clay puts her seat back and puts her pillow on the chair.

Darryl doesn't question it. Darryl doesn't question lots of things, from wearing the matching duck onesie on pajama day to letting Clay cry on him more times than she'd like to admit.

That *was* a cute duck onesie.

Clay lets Darryl's silence and the car lull her to sleep. She needs it, after all.

---

US History is a chore.

Mr. Stein's voice rings out through the class as Clay and her classmates dutifully take out their notebooks for notes that they can just take at home anyways and go through the PowerPoint at a more leisurely pace.

Mr. Stein isn't monotone, but for all that Clay cares right now, he could be. Clay casually takes the time to turn to a blank page in her notebook and to title her page with neat little letters that indent deep into the paper.

Eh, screw it. She'll just do it later.

The sleep she got in Darryl's car is a blessing, making it so that she doesn't fall asleep in class and get herself in trouble. She flips back to an older notes page, one that she won't be tested on, and she starts drawing lines. Not of anything in particular. She can't really draw but she doesn't have the inspiration to write, no plotlines or anything.

So instead, she thinks of real life. Of the milkshake that she had shared with Georgie, of what Col and Darryl had said to her about it.

Georgie, Georgie, Georgie. Clay could say the name forever and it still wouldn't be enough.

So was yesterday an indication or is she falling too deep?

---

*i can't be at lunch today sorry*

Clay checks her phone after her fourth period English class. Georgie had sent that message just before class let out. Clay drafts a text.

*are you using your phone in class?*

She sends it. After that, new text immediately.

*nope have a fever and a terrible headache. not covid tho trust me i got my immunisations*

Clay smiles at Georgie's spelling at the end, but otherwise she's worried. She drafts a new text and sends it.

*ok i trust u. miss u tho*

She moves to put her phone away when she sees that she's gotten a new text message.

*miss you too <3*

---

"Are you still sick?" Clay asks.

"I still have the fever," Georgie replies. "Head is all good, though."

Georgie's voice is made crackly by the phone, and it sounds good even through there.

"That sucks," Clay says.

"Eh," Georgie responds. "I'm just super cold. All of the time. Right now, I'm covered in blankets."

"Covered?" Clay questions. She can feel her eyebrow furrowing even though she doesn't mean for it to.

"I'll send a selfie," Georgie answers exasperatedly.

Georgie sends a text a few seconds later, with an image attached.

The image is of her snuggled up in a blanket and against a pillow. Her face is flushed more than it normally is due to the fever, but she's still smiling. It's adorable. Clay's heart warms at it.

*cutie omg*

Georgie sends back a red heart emoji.

Clay's heart is on fire, and she doesn't want to extinguish the flames.

## Chapter End Notes

so i know that this is shorter than usual

like a lot lot lot shorter

i've just been kind of eh this week overall in emotions bUT

if you enjoyed, kudos (if you haven't already) and comment below !!

# my bounty is as boundless as the sea

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Clay doesn't want to get up on Saturday. Her bed is warm and soft in a comforting way, not a weird, sweaty way. She can sleep in, so she should.

Despite logic and common sense saying that she should sleep, she's not sleeping. Instead, she's just wrapped up in her bed, staring at the wall.

It's 10AM, so her Do Not Disturb turns off. Clay gets a few notifications, but not too many.

New message from Georgie.

*good news i no longer am too sick*

That means Clay will see Georgie again, get to laugh and see each other in the same space. Well, hopefully. The "too" in Georgie's message is dampening Clay's hopes.

*that's good! can you elaborate on "too sick?"*

Clay sends it. New text from Georgie.

*afraid i cannot*

Clay frowns but she doesn't press further.

---

"So, today we're going to do a Minecraft Party stream!" Clay says. The chat goes wild, with quite a few people appearing.

**bunnyyy:** wait omg debating whether i should watch or play lol

**Simpnapstan138:** Omg please notice me Dream

**Technobacon:** MC party is based

**creeperawman535:** i have been grinding on there lmaoo

**Snapplecoffee:** Horse games

**cwiggle34:** traumatic flashbacks to fifth grade

"I am here with Simpnep and BadBoyHalo," Clay continues.

"You're the simp, if anything," Col complains.

"No more fighting," Darryl declares, "We are all not sims."

**biggiantsimp:** i'm a simp bbh :ccc

"Anyways, feel free to join us! We are not nicknamed right now, so hopefully there isn't too much lag," Clay announces. She grimaces.

"Oof, the sand game," Col remarks, "Thank God we don't have to play it. I hate this one."

"Horse game." Clay furrows her brows. "The game isn't even started, how did I leave?"

"I'm not even on a horse. How, just, how?" Darryl asks.

**cwiggle34:** spam shift

**Snapplecoffee:** spam left shift

**Tiredndsleeby:** Spam L Shift and you'll get on a horse eventually lol

**Rolling6sided:** ^^^^^^

"Bad, chat is telling me that you need to just left shift until you get on a horse," Clay summarizes.

"Thanks guys," Darryl replies. He moves ahead of Clay, easily surpassing her.

**lwohcore771 donated \$5!**

"Thank you, uh, I am so sorry, I cannot pronounce that." Clay squints. "L, w, o, h core seven seven one."

"Come on, *Dream*," Col teases. "Move or you're going to get kicked for inactivity."

"Ok, Simpnap, no need to get so frazzled." Clay rolls her eyes for effect, even though Col can't see them. She presses her control, space key, and W key to keep moving ahead while keeping her mouse facing forward in order to try and get ahead.

It doesn't really matter, because the game ends soon and Clay gets twelfth place.

"Eighth," Darryl announces while Col's Minecraft name appears on the screen in third place.

**omegalul9273:** pogn't for dream

**Snapplecoffee:** just confirmation that dream isn't a horse girl. sapnap meanwhile...

**lwohcore771 highlighted their message!** *sapnap da horse girl*

**sapplenapple27:** Stop accusing Sapnap of being a horse girl

**rekd2386 donated \$0.93!**

The metallic voice reads, "Stop slandering my girl Sapnap, she is not a horse girl. Thank you."

"Thank you to whoever donated that," Col replies. "You cannot see me right now, but I'm smiling, I swear."

"Sheep shear," Darryl announces, "Apparently we get launched into the air every time that we get a sheep."

"Ugh, fairness." Clay jokingly scoffs.

"Agreed," Col says.

Clay sees flashes of Col and Darryl on her screen as they pass by, shearing sheep. Clay gets a six

point sheep, so she gets launched in the sky.

"Is this a bad time to mention my fear of heights?" Clay mentions sarcastically, "Ok, I'm kidding. Not scared of this but I am scared of heights. Write it into fanfiction or something."

"Oh, God, Dream," Darryl replies, "I think you've triggered the chat."

Clay glances over at Twitch. "Nah, they're - I see what you're doing and I almost fell for it. Nice try."

The screen flashes with their places at the end of the game. Clay is in second, and Darryl and Col don't place.

"So close. Fourth." Col throws something. "I'm rage quitting."

Darryl snorts. "I got fifth, and I'm fine. Sore loser."

Clay grins.

---

In the end, they quit at about around three AM. It's Sunday now, and Clay thinks that she's gotten a decent amount of money from this.

It all goes to college. It has to, what with her mother telling her about how she's destined for more than a state university and blah blah blah. She doesn't like the spiels, but it was the only way her parents approved of her Twitch streaming.

She yawns and checks her phone, bypassing the "Do Not Disturb" by looking at her recent text messages (none), Discord messages (a considerable amount from fans, one from Skeppy, and a few in the groupchat between Col, Darryl, and her). There's no point in checking her pings anymore. She's muted most of her servers, but she still gets ghost pings anyways.

Clay checks the message from Zak.

**Skeppy:**

nvm im fin sory fir the msg (*edited*)

Clay types out a response.

**Dream:**

gl to whatever u were doing

Zak is either invisible or offline, and judging on the way that he's not sending a message back, he's probably offline.

Clay should do the same thing, but she logs out and goes onto her alt, where she's joined a variety of school channels and academic channels. Channels where it's good not to be famous. She checks the pings for those, mostly just events and some chat pings from unfinished conversations.

She yawns and sets down her phone. She spins around in her chair, but it just makes her dizzy and it's not worth it. Clay picks it up and turns on a sleep podcast. Even though she's not really feeling insomniatic tonight, it still helps in case she wakes up in only a few hours. Plus, Discord doesn't show podcasts, so nobody can shame her for it.

She's surprisingly exhausted, she notes, as she stops remembering what she's thinking right now at all.

---

Clay wakes up the next day with a really bad headache.

She tries taking herself out of bed, but she can't. It hurts way too much.

"Clay!" her mom calls, which only serves to hurt her head more.

She gets out of bed to unlock the door, even though the pounding pain in her head isn't ceding. Then, she goes back to her bed so that she can have at least minor relief from the incessant throbbing.

"Clay?" her mom asks. Her mom opens her door.

"Yeah?" Clay answers.

"Breakfast is ready," her mom replies.

"I have a really bad headache," Clay admits.

Her mom tuts. "You didn't get enough sleep last night. Or water."

"Yeah, but it really hurts." Clay winces as she speaks.

"I'll bring you food, along with water and pills. Don't make a mess, please."

"I won't." Clay smiles weakly. "Thanks. I love you."

Her mom smiles back. "Love you too."

---

Despite the weekend, Clay feels so tired at school. Her feet are almost dragging on the ground and she feels like her back is about to collapse from all of the things in her backpack.

Everybody's already at the table when Clay arrives to it. She doesn't know why, but it's taking her longer to pack up after each class. She hasn't been late yet to anything - except lunch, but there's no such thing as being late for lunch - so it isn't really a problem, but it's something.

It all just feels like so much, like she needs a break. Clay doesn't know if she can keep her (already abysmal) Twitch schedule on top of her (decent) YouTube schedule on top of a rigid school schedule. Not to mention, there's merch and social media. And the play.

So yeah, maybe there's a problem. And Clay should probably stop pretending like she's totally fine.

"Are you good?" Georgie asks, snapping Clay out of her thoughts.

"Physically? Fine. Mentally? Just thinking of all three thousand things I have to do this week." Clay gives a mirthless chuckle.

"Three thousand? Really?" Georgie widens her eyes.

"Okay, I'm exaggerating. Just so many things to do and so little time to do them," Clay replies. She takes a bite out of her cold quesadilla. She doesn't feel like reheating it right now.



"Mm," Georgie acknowledges, "Yeah, I get that."

"Do you want to take a break from the thing for a week?" Col asks, glancing at Georgie and back to Clay.

"Yeah, don't worry. She already knows. Apparently it was from our voices," Clay answers, "And maybe. I've considered, but it's kind of unfair to do that without giving any advance notice."

"They'll understand," Darryl pipes up, "Heck, they understand with Col. She has like, what, five videos on her channel?"

"That's different," Clay protests.

"They'll still understand," Darryl insists, "You don't have to give anyone advance warning. You're just living your life."

"I guess," Clay responds, taking another bite of the cold quesadilla.

---

Clay's had the new notification on her phone for a few minutes now. She's not going to check it because she's doing homework. Her productivity has been good so far.

Fuck it.

Clay turns on her phone to check the notification.

It's from Georgie.

*hey, do you want to take a break from school tomorrow?*

Clay opens her phone and replies to the text.

*you mean skipping?*

Georgie responds almost immediately.

*if that's what you want to call it.*

Clay snickers. She types her next text.

*i'll think about it.*

Send.

---

*yes*

That's all Clay sends at 11pm. That's all she needs to send.

She falls asleep satisfied and forming a game plan.

sorry for the short chap ./ i've been busy with summer classes and school :c i have most of the next chap written (i decided to split this one into two so that i could actually post content for the first time in months)

kudos and comment (and feel free to yell @ me) below! it gives me lots of motivation to write.

## to crush you into little stars

### Chapter Summary

the best solution is to run away with problems, not from them.

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Hey, mom," Clay says, at her mom's door, still in her pajamas.

"Morning," her mom replies, "Do you need anything?"

"Can I-" Clay stops. She feels so small. Can she even ask for this? "Can I have a mental health day? I've just felt so busy and tired and -"

"Sure," her mom replies, "But this is it for a few months."

"That should be good, I hope," Clay responds nervously, "Thanks."

She goes back to her room. Her mom is calling the school, according to what she can hear her mom is saying.

Clay looks at her unmade bed. It looks awfully comfortable, more comfortable than it does during the night.

Obviously, she climbs in and falls straight asleep.

---

Three hours later, her mom walks into her room. Clay is just getting up, blinking sleep out of her eyes when she sees the sudden light from the outside.

"I'm going to work now," her mom says, "Don't stress yourself out."

"I promise I won't," Clay replies, feeling kind of like a small kid again.

Her mom smiles. "I love you."

"Love you too, Mom." Clay gives a smile of her own. Then, she gets up and hugs her mom, feeling a strange pang of something she can't quite identify.

Eventually, she lets go because she has to.

Immediately, she goes back to her bed and checks her phone. One new text from Georgie.

*are you free around 10*

Clay looks at her nearby clock. 9AM. She replies.

*should be, why?*

She sets her phone on her bed and goes to the bathroom to brush her teeth. As she brushes her tongue (a very crucial step in the process to make sure her mouth can fully transform into artificial mint flavoring), she realizes that she feels fully relaxed for the first time in a while.

Clay kind of wants to just revel in this feeling of relaxation, but she also wants to revel in the feeling of freedom.

So she gives in to the latter.

---

"So, where are we headed?" Georgie asks.

Georgie is wearing a white shirt with a black grid on it, and black knee-length shorts. It's an ensemble that can only really be gotten with at this time of year in Florida.

The day is perfectly sunny, not a cloud in sight, and Clay's pushed the cover to the sun roof to the side so that sunlight can stream in from the top.

"Well, you haven't gotten a tour of the city yet," Clay replies, "So I'm giving you the tour."

She's out of the town limits by now, getting closer and closer to the city.

"You're giving me a tour on your day off? You're sweet," Georgie says.

Clay can feel herself blushing and smiling. "Of course I'm giving you a tour. You're a local now."

"Awesome." Georgie grins. "It's all going to be a surprise?"

"Well." Clay ponders. "What is your favorite dessert?"

"Well, I really like chocolate covered raisins," Georgie answers, after a little pause.

"Well, that's good," Clay replies, trying not to think about the raisin part, "That's going to relate to something later. Don't know if they have raisins but definitely the chocolate part."

"Are you taking me to a world famous chocolatier?" Georgie asks, grinning.

Clay blushes. "I wouldn't say that or else you must call me a simp."

Georgie laughs and Clay laughs too, but she laughs quieter than Georgie so that she can really take in Georgie's laugh.

"I wouldn't dare," Georgie replies overdramatically, then bursts into laughter again.

"I'm going to crash if I keep laughing this hard," Clay says, trying to keep a straight face and look at the road.

Georgie only grins back, and Clay has to tear herself away so that they get to their destination safely.

---

Traffic on International is always shit. Tourists are everywhere and Clay can't even risk taking her eyes off of the road.

But, eventually, she gets through it.

"Well, this is our first stop," Clay announces, grinning.

The stop in question was a lake. Lake Eola Park. Clay has fond memories of this park from her childhood, renting a boat and going on the lake, or simply just walking beside it.

"Are we walking? Not sure why you said that I might need extra clothes," Georgie answers.

"Nope, we're going on a boat."

---

"I can't believe I get to finally say this," Georgie suddenly says. "Say what?" Clay asks, tilting her head slightly.

"I'm on a boat, I'm on a boat. Everybody look at me cause I'm sailing on a boat," Georgie quotes.

Clay laughs. "Come on. We gotta row."

"We can't just float?" Georgie asks hopefully.

"We can if you want to," Clay answers, "But we have to put some effort to make it work."

"Okay." Georgie nods and grabs the oars.

---

After some smooth sailing (quite literally), they go to lunch.

"So, you told me that you were craving Indian food?" Clay asks as they exit Clay's car.

"Yes?" Georgie replies.

"Well, you're in luck." Clay beams.

They take the elevator down (while Clay puts the location of her parking ticket in her phone to remind herself of it) and walk a bit to the restaurant.

"Oh my god, thank you so much," Georgie says excitedly, "You have *no* idea how much I've been craving pakora."

Clay just smiles. She doesn't eat Indian food often, so she's just sticking with what Georgie will recommend.

"For two?" the waiter greets.

"Yes," Clay replies.

"Alright. Just a second." The host taps on the electronic display in front of her.

Then, the host grabs two menus. "Follow me, please."

Clay and Georgie follow the host, and sit down at the booth the host leads them to. It's a four person booth, so it's a bit roomy, and they sit on opposite sides. Because of course they do.

Georgie immediately opens the menu.

"There are so many things I need you to try and I don't think we'll get to them all," she says excitedly, "We can get to some of it, though."

"Well, I can order stuff and you can order stuff, right?" Clay asks.

"Should I tell you what to order?" Georgie replies, cocking her eyebrow in a way that makes Clay weak.

"You can *help* me," Clay responds, "So essentially, yes."

"Ok." Georgie looks determinedly at the menu. "Let's do this."

---

When the appetizers arrive, Clay is hungry. She didn't realize how hungry she was, but rowing must have made her famished. So now she's dipping fried onions into fruit sauce and leaf sauce and it's delicious.

"Don't know if I can eat Thin Mints after this," Clay says in between bites, "I mean, I probably will, but I don't *know* if I can."

"Good to know." Georgie dips her fried onion, a thing called *onion bhaji*, into her tamarind sauce. "This reminds me of the takeaway back home."

Clay doesn't ask. She doesn't need to know about Georgie's past when she's a part of Georgie's present and future.

Instead, she takes the last bit of onion and dips it into the sauce on her plate as she watches Georgie drink her mango thing.

It reminds her of the milkshake.

---

The entrees are so much bigger than Clay thought they would be.

The table has butter and garlic naan, the latter of which Georgie is eating happily on its own.

"You need to try this." Georgie points at the chicken thing they got. "It's the national dish of the UK."

"I thought we were eating food, not a sad excuse of it," Clay quips.

"That's why it's the national food. Ours is too bad," Georgie responds.

She looks around the restaurant despite there being almost nobody there.

"Also," Georgie continues, in a slight whisper, "We servants of the Queen just *love* stealing from the cultures we colonized."

Clay shrugs. "I mean, so does America."

"Anyways," Georgie says, louder this time, "You need to try this. Get some of the plain naan and the curry and just like, scoop it up with the naan."

"Like this?" Clay asks, trying to demonstrate what Georgie told her.

Her fingers are clumsy, trying to hold onto what pieces of chicken she can get holding inside of the bread. She tries to close it before she lifts it and brings it to her mouth.

"Hm." Clay nods while eating the chicken.

There's a lot of flavor in it, tomato and spices and chicken and warmth. She chews it thoroughly, making sure not to be slow but also making sure to not rush through it.

"It's really good," Clay concludes.

Georgie just sips on her mango thing and grins.

---

She really underestimated how full she would be after this. The meal sits warmly in her stomach. Maybe they should do a little drive before their next stop.

"Are you good with just driving around a little bit?" Clay asks.

"Mhm," Georgie replies.

Clay brings down her window and she can hear Georgie doing the same. Clay's window isn't down too far, just far enough to hear the sounds of the city.

When Clay was younger, her mom used to drive through the city and Clay would look out the back window of this very same car. It was always so busy, with so many people and tourists. They didn't really go to Disney (Clay was taught from a young age that Universal is superior and she still agrees with that, in fact) but seeing the people out of the window was just fascinating to her, with their different languages and all of that.

Now, she's older, so International has lost a bit of its charm as she has to actually drive through it. Especially when she has to drive through it multiple times a day. It's worth it though, to see even a slight smile on Georgie's face.

It's always been worth it to see Georgie smile.

---

"And our final attraction of the day," Clay announces, locking the car with the key fob, "The World of Chocolate museum."

Georgie widens her eyes. "A whole museum? Dedicated to chocolate?"

Clay nods. "Yup."

"Far better than a world famous chocolatier," Georgie declares.

Clay grins. "I'm happy that you like it."

They head inside. Clay can feel adrenaline run through her body. This is it.

"Two children tickets," Clay says at the counter.

It's late enough that they could have just come out from school, so Clay doesn't worry about saying that. She hands over the money for the tickets.

"The next tour is in fifteen minutes," the lady at the ticket counter responds, handing Clay and Georgie their tickets, "Enjoy!"

---

The tour starts off with a short Powerpoint about the history of chocolate, then goes into a recreation of a tropical rainforest. The large leaves envelop Clay in a way that makes her feel special, in a way. While Clay is wrapped up in the leaves, Georgie takes a picture. Clay grins

cheesily.

"I already took the picture." Georgie chuckles.

Clay just widens her smile.

Eventually, they move from the tropical rainforest to the chocolate sculpture room. Clay gets a photo this time of Georgie pretending to eat a chocolate sculpture.

"I get you in the leaves and I'm voring the Eiffel Tower?" Georgie asks.

"Duh," Clay responds.

Clay gets photos of other chocolate sculptures sans Georgie, but the one with Georgie is her favorite. It's a lot of fun.

After that, they get to see the process of making chocolate. It's a lot of machines and gears that Clay tries to connect together but she can't do it.

They move onto the tasting room next, where everybody gets morsels of famous fancy chocolate.

"Which one was your favorite?" Clay asks.

"All of them were good, I can't really tell the difference," Georgie replies, "You?"

"Yeah, same," Clay answers.

Clay checks the time on her phone. It's almost four. They have about four hours until they get home, and rush hour shouldn't be that bad.

It's almost stupid and impulsive and Clay knows that she shouldn't do this, probably.

"Wanna head to the café?"

---

They're leaving Orlando now. The mood in the car is muted. Neither of them want to leave, well, Clay definitely doesn't at least.

She turns on the radio in the car and leaves it at the preset that it's already set to.

It's playing a song that Clay hasn't heard in a while. It's called "The Lady in Red," but she's forgotten who it's by. Her mom played it in the car when she was younger.

"I fucking hate rush hour," she complains to herself underneath her breath.

Currently, Clay and Georgie are stuck in stop-and-go traffic on the freeway. So much for being free. The car's engine is definitely paying for this.

Georgie is looking out the window as far as Clay can tell. Her elbow sits on a little armrest and her hand supports her face. The position that Georgie's in makes it a bit difficult for Clay to see her right hand mirror, but it's fine.

"Anything interesting out there?" Clay softly asks.

"No," Georgie answers.

They go by for a moment with silence.



"Yes," Georgie reanswers, "I think I'm getting my first glance at a Florida man."

"Ooh, what's the scene?" Clay's always been weirdly fascinated by Florida men, and for good reason. They're weird, and she has a front seat to the weird.

"I don't really know how to describe it." Georgie sighs. "On all fours, shoes on his hands and feet, sipping on a tube that leads to a pack on his back that I think is beer. Also naked except underwear, and moving really fast."

Clay giggles. "Get a picture."

Georgie gets her phone out and adjusts her camera. Clay can hear a click and then Georgie brings her phone down.

"Jesus Christ," Georgie says, shaking her head.

Clay just laughs.

---

*New multimedia text from Georgie.*

Clay opens it. She gets the Florida man and the picture of herself in the leaves.

She sends her picture of Georgie from today to her.

Georgie replies quickly.

*ily tysm*

Clay can feel her heartbeat racing. She sends a text back.

*yw*

## Chapter End Notes

pog i got this out  
thank u to Lilbug for motivating me to write bc it would spite them and they pretend to  
dislike me  
school is kicking my ass but what can u do  
uhh please comment and kudos below !! it gives me more motivation and it makes me  
write faster C:

# **all the world will be in love with night**

## Chapter Summary

there are four burners in her life. there are four burners and she needs to make sure she doesn't burn herself out.

## Chapter Notes

WOW it has been a hot minute since i have updated! this fandom is a totally different scene from when i first updated but i still like this fic and honestly still want to update it. i got some writer's block for this fic, but i'm back and better than ever.

slight tw for religion between "Col nods and Clay takes her next step lightly" and "Clay pauses to consider what Col had just said." it's only minor and it isn't majorly discussed but it's there.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"You're getting this message on behalf of Col, so, where were you yesterday, you little... muffin?" Darryl asks.

"I know she called me a bitch, don't censor it," Clay replies.

It's the next day before her first period. Clay took the bus today and Darryl drove, but they still have more than enough time to talk. They're walking down the hall where there aren't too many people around.

"Language!" Darryl hisses before checking around to see if the coast is clear, which it is. "Were you really sick yesterday?"

Clay swallows the saliva in her throat. She can feel it getting thicker, so swallowing it isn't going to be useful anyway.

"Yes or no question, Clay."

Clay exhales. "No."

"Why didn't you invite us along?" Darryl grins. "Come on. We could've had so much fun!"

"Not sure if you noticed who else was missing," Clay responds in a low voice.

It's kind of funny to see Darryl's face shift in real time as all of the puzzle pieces fall into place in his head. Clay has to suppress her smile and a giggle or two.

"Ohh."

"Yeah, that's why I didn't invite you guys."

Darryl bumps Clay in the shoulder with his elbow. Clay just laughs.

"Did you have fun at least?" Darryl asks.

Clay grins from ear to ear. "Yeah. Lots."

---

*simp*

Clay rolls her eyes at her phone. She replies with a rude text of her own.

*col stfu*

She puts her phone in her pocket as she walks in the halls to lunch. She had spent too much time in English class trying to review for the test on the book they're reading and now she's paying dearly for it by being late to lunch. It's not like she'll get a tardy for being late to lunch. It'd be stupid. Kind of dumb to be late to a class that's not even regulated or graded.

Her steps are lonely in the empty hallway and the soft patter of her shoes fill the space around her like a scream into the void. She can hear the voices of teachers teaching various subjects, like physics and geometry. Fragments of speeches about Coulomb and the Sine Law fill some of the empty space in the hallway, taking from the soft patter of her shoes.

Soon, she hears a blend of voices that are indistinguishable from each other. She can pick out laughter and certain words but she can't actually overhear a conversation. The loudness shields her lateness. Nobody really cares if she's late or not, anyways.

Nobody, except for-

"Clay!" Col yells when Clay is close enough to the table, "What took you so fucking long?"

"English," Clay replies, sitting down and taking her lunchbox out of her backpack.

Georgie is at the table too and she looks at Clay.

"Hi," Georgie says.

"Hey," Clay responds.

They sit in silence for a few moments. It's awkward. Very awkward. What happened?

"Anyways, my advice to you two: never take physics. I hate it," Col complains, "If I hear one more word about forces today, I will spontaneously combust."

"Don't you have physics next period?" Clay asks.

"My class can draw a diagonal force diagram of my tattered remains," Col states dramatically, "I don't even care anymore."

Georgie raises her eyebrows. "Are you okay? You need a *mental health day*?"

Clay freezes for a second, then remembers that Col knows about their outing, so it's okay for Georgie to say that. God, it almost came out of nowhere. Col looks at Clay conspicuously and Clay stares at Col as if Clay is going to say "force" if Col doesn't keep on pressing the matter.

Darryl comes walking to the table with a tray and a grin on his face. "I just signed up for stage

crew! Fingers crossed they tell me stuff about it soon."

"Awesome!" Col replies, "I'm really excited. Don't drop a light on us, please."

"I don't think I'm going to be doing lights," Darryl responds, "Probably more set-moving, honestly."

Clay nods. "Well, I'm excited to meet everyone."

"Me too!" Darryl says enthusiastically.

---

Col pulls aside Clay after she is done with AP CompSci.

"Do you want to go out and do something dumb after practice?" Col asks.

Clay grins. "I always will. What will we do?"

"I don't know, but we won't head to the city and skip school like you did with your *girlfriend*," Col teases, her smile growing wider in accordance with the blush on Clay's face, "Maybe just kick some rocks at a beach. I don't know."

"I love kicking rocks at a beach. The beach with the Cuban restaurant?" Clay questions.

"Of course," Col replies, "You drove to school today, right?"

"No, I took the bus," Clay answers, "But I can come after Darryl drops me off."

"That sounds good!" Col responds, "Make sure to bring your money."

"Duh," Clay says.

Col heads into the Comp Sci classroom and Clay checks her clock. It's 2:21 now, meaning that she only has two minutes to get to Stats. If she could, she would take her time in walking to stats. Unfortunately, though, her school is liberal in giving tardies to any students in the halls without a pass and she's not in the mood for that. She quickly steps through the hall in order to try to get to class as quickly as possible. Luckily, the computer science wing is somewhat close to the mathematics wing of the building, so she should logically get there in two minutes. It would make sense.

Except for the fact that there's a giant bottleneck of people in the math wing and they're all shouting. Clay isn't sure what's going on, only that her stats class is right there and it's just out of reach.

"I swear to fucking God," Clay murmurs under her breath.

"Language," she hears a very familiar British voice tease.

Clay's throat and mouth go dry all of a sudden and she doesn't have water with her.

"Hey," she barely musters, feeling parched.

Georgie grins. "Hey yourself."

Clay's cheeks feel warm and she knows that she's probably blushing a little bit. "Do you know what the hell is going on?"

"I think it's the seniors," Georgie answers, "Something about-"

The bell rings loud and clear almost right above Clay and Georgie's ears, interrupting Georgie in the middle of her sentence. Clay groans. It's the class bell signifying her as tardy, and she already got one tardy in her stats class this semester. Besides, her stats teacher only tolerates Clay and honestly, Clay doesn't want to get on any teacher's bad side.

"Something about lunch," Georgie continues like she had never even been interrupted in the first place.

Clay nods in response to Georgie's statement. "What's your next class?"

"Biochem," Georgie responds, frowning.

"Oh shit, you're far!" Clay exclaims. She looks between all of the people for a spot to slither through the people in order to get to her stats class.

"A bit."

Somebody is being carried on top of other people's shoulders.

"They can't give us all tardies!" they shout.

"No, but you can stop being so annoying," Georgie whispers conspiratorially.

Clay rolls her eyes. "I know."

She sees an opening through some people and turns to Georgie. "Hey, I'll see you in practice today, okay?"

Georgie nods. "Yep. Cool. See you soon."

Clay goes through all of the people, suffering through teenage angst and body odor and sweat to get to her classroom. She's sure that she looks frazzled and her hair is frizzy and her skin is gleaming from the locked up teenager air and the Floridian weather.

She turns around to see if she can spot Georgie through the mess of people. But Georgie's already disappeared into the crowd. She's already gone.

---

"Do you want to stay in the restaurant or do you want to go outside?" Col asks, carefully balancing two containers of fried plantains in her two hands.

The restaurant is playing "Guantanamera" by Celia Cruz on at an almost-too-loud volume and the burgundy walls of the restaurant are only interrupted by open windows letting in a light sea breeze.

"I don't really mind," Clay answers, gratefully taking a container of fried plantains from Col, "Whatever you want, I guess."

"Um..." Col pauses. "We can go outside."

Clay nods. "Sounds good."

As they open the door, a light bell chimes to indicate their exit. The door gently swings to a close behind them as they leave the restaurant and head onto the sand that encroaches on the restaurant's parking lot.

"Found my first rock," Clay announces and she kicks it just far enough that she can see it land with a soft satisfying *plop* a few feet away.

Col smiles. "Were we really going to kick rocks? I thought we were going to be talking about girl drama."

"Girl drama? We don't ever fight with anyone," Clay retorts lightheartedly.

"I meant drama with you *dating* a girl, dumbass," Col affectionately replies, "Well, the not dating part. That's the bigger drama."

"What about you?" Clay asks.

She regrets that she hadn't asked sooner. Her life had just been a whirlwind of rehearsals and new friends and new feelings, but so had Col's life and she didn't even stop to consider that. It's shitty of her.

Col grins abashedly with a small blush rising across her cheeks. "You're deflecting *soo* much right now."

Clay shrugs. "It's not deflecting. I feel shitty for not asking."

"Please, I can let you have a bit of the spotlight if it means that I can endlessly tease you after," Col jokes.

"Maybe you deserve the spotlight too."

Col stops in her place. The two aren't too far away from anybody else but from the angle they're at, it's pretty hard for anyone to see them.

"I-" Col tries to say. Clay waits.

"Can I tell you something? Just to be honest?" Col continues.

Clay smiles. "Always."

"I think - no. I'm pretty sure that I'm gay. A- a lesbian."

"Hey, I'm glad that you told me," Clay replies, "You want to continue walking?"

Col nods and Clay takes her next step lightly so that she doesn't sink into the deep sand. Col eats a fried plantain while gracefully stepping over rocks and sticks in the sand.

Col sighs. "I'm sorry but it always seemed so *easy* for you. One year you dated Sam and the next you're just going to date a girl. Like it's just not a big deal - it's not, but it feels like such a big deal to me, you know? You just could move on and I was just stuck. Maybe it was just the religious repression or maybe it was just a me problem."

Clay pauses to consider what Col had just said.

"It wasn't easy for me," Clay finally responds, "I just dealt with that shit in eighth grade and kept it repressed. That wasn't healthy of me at all. I'm glad that you're telling me now instead of keeping it all bottled - it gets ugly, you know? And if you ever need help, you can just ask."

"I'm glad that you told us too, eventually," Col echoes, "It's just that maybe I was jealous. Jealous that you knew how to control your feelings and how to move on. It's stupid, but it's what I felt. I'm

sorry."

"You don't need to apologize. I get it, we handle shit differently. You know, you're neurotypical and I was always so jealous of your focus in everything you do, especially cause you're my best friend. I didn't really control my feelings. It was more like apathy, I guess," Clay says.

Col thoughtfully munches on one of her fried plantain pieces.

"They're still warm," she notes.

Clay takes a few of her own fried plantain pieces and sets it in her mouth, chewing to let the subtle sweetness and the not-so-subtle oil come out and mix into a burst of flavor on her tongue.

"So, is there a girl, then? Or someone else?" Clay asks.

Col laughs and the familiar raucous laugh is as warm as the Florida sun shining on them right now. "There's a girl, yeah."

Clay snorts. "Does she have a name?"

"Probably," Col answers, "I'm pretty sure."

"Fuck you."

"I'm saving myself for marriage!"

"Mhm." Clay starts laughing, unable to hold it in any longer. "Sure."

"Her name is Karolina," Col suddenly says, "And she's in Orchestra. She plays the cello and she's so smart and beautiful that it's unfair."

"Haha, simp," Clay teases, "I've been waiting to say that one for a while."

Col shrugs. "Karma, I guess."

They continue laughing and eating their sweet fried plantains as the wind lightly whips their hair and the sun slowly sets. Eventually, they'll go back to the car, where they'll throw their containers that used to hold fried plantains in a trashbin nearby and they'll panic about the homework that they hadn't done yet today. But that's later, and for now, they get to be here.

## Chapter End Notes

lesbian sapnap !!!

if you enjoyed, please leave a kudos if you haven't already and comment below with what you liked! those keep me motivated to write and make me super happy.

note:

the fandom has changed a lot and i understand that the new audience i get now is going to be a lot different than the one i got back in october 2020. please remain respectful in the comments and please stay cool, no matter who you are!

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